

‘MAYA’

The Whirlpool of Delusions In This Creation

As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’

English Exposition by:-

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Ayodhya (Faizabad, U.P.)

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.

Mobile: +919451290400, +919935613060

Website: <www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com>

Email of Author: (i) <ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com>
(ii) <ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com>

Facebook ID <www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8>

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/in/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia

Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia

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Contents:

Dedication: Page 4

1. Preface: Page 5

2. Chapter 1: The Concept of Maya: Page 7

3. Chapter 2: The Various Forms & Names of Maya: Page 20

 Section 2.1—The 3 forms of Maya: Page 20

 Section 2.2—The 4 forms of Maya: Page 27

 Section 2.3—The 8 forms of Maya: Page 28

 Section 2.4—The Maya Shakti: Page 29

 Section 2.5—The Maya Jaal: Page 37

 Section 2.6—The 3 colours of Maya: Page 37

4. Chapter 3: The Affects of Maya: Page 39

5. Chapter 4: How Maya Created the World: Page 51

6. Chapter 5: The Relationship of Maya

 With other Entities of Creation: Page 57

7. Chapter 6: The Associates of Maya: Page 67

8. Chapter 7: How Maya can be Overcome: Page 81

 Section 7.1: The View of the Upanishad: Page 81

 Section 7.2: The View of Ram Charit Manas: Page 85

9. About the Author: Page: 90

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DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED LORD RAM

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same ‘Parmatma’, the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be ‘his very own’ is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram whom even Lord Shiva had revered and worshipped. And surely of course to Lord Hanuman who was a manifestation of Shiva himself. Finding no words to express my profound gratitude to Ram, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

“He leadeth me! O blessed tho'!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!” [A Hymn]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Author

“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

(As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’)

PREFACE

The term ‘MAYA’ (pronounced as Maa+Yaa=Maya) is a very esoteric and abstruse term in Indian metaphysical philosophy. It has two components—‘Maa’ and ‘Yaa’. “Maa” means ‘not’, and “Yaa” means ‘that’. In other words, the word Maya means ‘not that’, or ‘that is not what you think it to be’. It simply means that ‘what you think to be true is not, it is a mirage; the truth lies elsewhere’.

To elaborate on the above abridged meaning of the word, it refers to ‘a self-created web of delusions in which the Jiva (living being) finds himself entangled and trapped like a spider in the web spun by it, and this makes the Jiva so confused that he begins to treat as true and reliable things that are not true and trustworthy’.

There is yet another way of interpreting the meaning of the word Maya. Its first component “Maa” means ‘mother; a progenitor; something that creates’, while the other component “Yaa” refers to the notion of ‘having doubt, of either this or that; the notion marked by uncertainty’. The word ‘Ma’ also means ‘to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of’. Therefore, the composite word “Maya” refers to a situation which harbours uncertainties, where it is uncertain whether what is said or understood or seen or witnessed or experienced is actually the truth or not. It is virtually the ‘mother of all confusions and perplexities’.

In this Book titled “Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation” we are going to study this phenomenon in detail, basing our discussion on the way the ‘Upanishads’ have elucidated on this theme, as well as citing ‘Ram Charit Manas’ of Goswami Tulsidas, which is a devotional classic describing the divine story of Lord Ram, popularly known as the ‘Ramayana’, but is rich in content that has a high level of spiritual and metaphysical philosophy woven and blended into its text, to clarify certain points more succinctly.

I sincerely hope this book will interest all the readers who want to learn and become acquainted with the intricacies of this mystical theme known as “Maya” which has been one of the central themes in all Indian scriptures and their spiritual, theological and metaphysical philosophy.

Author:

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

Email of Author: (i) <ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com>
(ii) <ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com>

Date: 15th October, 2015

Place: Ayodhya, (Uttar Pradesh), INDIA

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“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

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Chapter 1

The Concept of Maya

The term ‘MAYA’ (pronounced as Maa+Yaa=Maya) is a very esoteric and abstruse term in Indian metaphysical philosophy. It has two components—‘Maa’ and ‘Yaa’. “Maa” means ‘not’, and “Yaa” means ‘that’. In other words, the word Maya means ‘not that’, or ‘that is not what you think it to be’. It simply means that ‘what you think to be true is not, it is a mirage; the truth lies elsewhere’.

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There is yet another way of interpreting the word “Maya”. The first half ‘Maa’ refers to a ‘mother; a progenitor; something that creates’, while the other half “Yaa” refers to the notion of ‘having doubt, of either this or that; the notion marked by uncertainty’.

The independent word ‘Ma’ also means ‘to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of’.

Therefore, the composite word “Maya” refers to a situation which harbours uncertainties, where it is uncertain whether what is said or understood or seen or witnessed or experienced is actually the truth or not. It is virtually the ‘mother of all confusions and perplexities’. It therefore refers to something or some situation which creates or produces perplexities, doubts and confusions, something that is not real; that which is deluding, illusionary, deceptive, mirage-like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define all these complex phenomena at once. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance-based, illusionary, deceitful, invisible and super-natural in the sense that it defies all logic and understanding; all that which has no reality or substance inspite of appearing to be for real; all that is hollow and lacks gravity though appearing to be solid and dense. It creates hallucinations in a creature’s mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth. It is the deluding and magical dynamic powers of the supreme transcendental Lord that hides the reality and creates an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions.

Maya is the indescribable and inconceivable cosmic dynamic power that Brahm employs to create delusions.

Maya is the deluding power of the supreme Authority in creation known as Brahm that has been used by him to create the sense of duality. The factual position is that everything is one and the same, and the different views of them is simply an illusion just like one sees a mirage in a desert and thinks it to be real whereas everyone knows that it is a physical phenomenon created due to the effect of excessive heat on desert sand, and it is the deluded mind that thinks it to be real though it is well aware that such things do happen in a desert and it is wise advice not to follow this illusion.

Likewise, when Brahm decided to initiate the process of creation, he had to create a smokescreen of delusions to enable him to hide the truth, because otherwise everyone would renounce this world of artificiality and become recluses, and the result would be everyone becoming a monk, renouncing the world and the resultant termination of the cycle of birth and death!

So under the influence of Maya or worldly delusions, the living creature thinks that it, the Jiva, and Ishwar, the Lord, are two separate entities. The Jiva offers prayers to the Ishwar and looks upon him for his benevolent mercy and intercession in order to survive and prosper in this competitive world; the Ishwar looks upon the Jiva to offer him oblations and worship that would sustain and nourish the former as well as keep him in an exalted and honourable position. There exists a mutual symbiotic relationship between the two. The Jiva lives on the earth, while the Ishwar lives in the heaven. The Jiva watches the exalted stature, glory, fame and powers that the Ishwar possesses, and so the Jiva tries to acquire that stature for himself. Therefore the Jiva does good and auspicious deeds to go up to heaven, but the deeds themselves pull the Jiva down because of their inherent and inbuilt nature to tie down anyone who gets involved in them. So the creature continues to oscillate like a pendulum between being a mortal being living on earth and the immortal being living in the heaven.

This is the theory of 'duality'. Both are covered in an invisible veil of ignorance-based delusion. From the metaphysical point of view, Ishwar is the sum total of all the causal bodies that exist in creation, while the Jiva is represented by the individual causal body which harbours the pure conscious Atma or soul. This factor of the 'pure conscious Atma or soul' is common to both the Ishwar and Jiva, and hence to treat them differently is a stupid proposition caused by deluding effects of the mind. This is called being sheathed by a veil of Maya, or being under the influence of ignorance that prevents one from realizing the truth and reality.

The example of the water molecule H_2O can be cited to explain the relationship between Maya and Brahm, and how the former distorts one's perception of the facts about the latter.

Water molecules exist in a number of forms—viz. clouds, rain, water vapour/steam, moisture, mist, foam, liquid pure water which we drink, water in the form of numerous water-bodies such as an ocean, a river, stream, well, pond, lake, puddle, pool etc., ice, snow, and water in the form of the basic ingredient of all things that have their existence in a fluid form. A lay person calls this 'water' with so many names; he sees a difference between all of them, but for a wise man who knows the chemistry of the water element all these existential forms of water are nothing but two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen combined in a fixed configuration which cannot be tempered with if the water has to retain its characteristic basic features, virtues and qualities.

The molecule of water acquires various forms depending on the circumstances in which it has to exist, but none of them would affect the basic nature and facts about water.

Similarly, Brahm, which is one indivisible immutable and unfractionable entity, assumes, or appears to exist in myriad forms, having mind-boggling permutations and combinations of shapes, sizes, colours and contours, depending upon the prevailing circumstances and requirements of existence. The same entity when viewed with different glasses appears to have different colours—as is evident when we observe anything with sunglasses of different colours. It acquires different meanings when viewed from different perspective—as is evident when the same event is interpreted differently by people having different views, different intelligence, different cultures, and different mental bearings. The same things changes in size and colour when observed from different distances—as is very clear when we observe a thing from very close quarters and then view it from a great distance; even the same mountain appears to be blue, green, dark and of other colours when seen at different times of the day and varying distances and through changing atmospheric conditions.

So it would be erroneous to say with certainty that what one has observed is the actual truth, for it might be very misleading and at odds to what others have observed. When, say, five people describe a mountain or scenery, each would narrate what he has observed. All of them are correct, but there is much more to that mountain or scenery than what one gathers from these narrations. Herein lie the importance of ‘self-realisation’, because we may doubt what others say, but we cannot be more convinced when we observe anything first hand for ourselves.

Brahm is like this water molecule; it has revealed itself in the form of this multifarious creation, each unit of the latter is Brahm manifested, but Brahm is not limited to that specific definition. All forms that the molecules of water take are nothing else but ‘water’, undiluted and uncorrupted. Whether we call it moisture, cloud, rain, steam, ice, river or ocean, none of these should deter a wise man from observing ‘water’, or better still ‘two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen’ in all these forms. A learned man would be amused when people fight over these definitions, and he would call them ignorant ones.

So when we observe Brahm with a holistic and all-inclusive view, we find that the entire creation is ‘Brahm manifested’; all the different nomenclatures and definitions pertain to the same entity and therefore all of them are correct. But none of these individual manifestations define Brahm in its entirety, and nor do they become Brahm.

This is Maya, which literally means something which does exist but it is an illusion, a deception and misleading. Water appears in so many forms because of this Maya, and so does Brahm vis-à-vis the world.

Now, there must be something that not only binds two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen together but also injects it with certain qualities that give the resultant product its uniqueness known as water. And this ‘uniqueness of water’ is not a small matter to be overlooked, because water is the harbinger of life, it is the sustainer of life, and it is the concluder of life. How? Well, it is the first ingredient necessary for initiation of the process of creation; once life starts it sustains it and nourishes it; and the havoc it causes during severe floods, typhoons, tsunamis, cyclonic deluges and oceanic storms when it completely obliterates all traces of life are examples of destruction water can cause. Quite similarly, in different perspectives, Brahm creates, sustains and concludes this creation.

Taken independently, hydrogen and oxygen would not produce water, and neither does their simultaneous existence in a single place automatically mean that water would be there, for had it been so then there would be no question of droughts anywhere because both these gases are present everywhere on earth. Therefore, there must be some supernatural force that helps these apparently innocuous looking atoms of these two gases to acquire a special quality known as water. This is called 'Shakti'. What does this Shakti do? It transforms the latent powers and potentials of hydrogen and oxygen into an entity called water that harbours life, sustains and nourishes it, and that even concludes its own creation, none of which functions would these two gases have done left to themselves. But does this Shakti come from outside? No, it is hidden in the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen, and it simply comes to the fore, does its job and collapses into oblivion, leaving the rest of the process to take care of its self by being controlled or influenced by other forces of Nature.

This allegory or analogy helps to explain how Brahm uses Shakti to create this world, and how the resultant product creates an illusion called Maya about the essential truth. Brahm uses its creative energy, called its Shakti, to create this world, both the visible as well as the invisible. Brahm then resides in this creation as its integral and inseparable part even as hydrogen and oxygen are integral to and inseparable from all forms in which water exists. The fundamental ignorance about 'who or what' is the basic truth of this existence, what is the essence in this existence, what is the fundamental principle behind what is seen or experienced or witnessed in this creation—is called 'Maya'.

Maya also has its importance in this context of existence, because if Maya or illusion does not exist then this world would also cease to exist as we know it. If the world ceases to exist as we know it, then there would be no question of any interaction or any kind of interdependence and relationship between any given two entities because there would be no distinction between them, and they would be all alike. Taking the example of water, if we do not distinguish between an ocean or river, or say between the water of a gutter and a well, telling ourselves that the essence of all these fluids is two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen, then it would be the height of stupidity for us and create a hilarious situation. So for the purpose of existence these differences have their own importance, but when we wish to learn and get educated about them and not remain ignorant fools then we come face to face with the facts. Even then, as long as we live, we cannot treat the water of the gutter and the water of the well alike for drinking purposes. This is Maya—it creates a piquant situation wherein we know that what we see is not the actual truth but we still cannot do anything about it and continue to treat the falsehood as the real thing.

The Atharva Veda's *Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, verse no. 25 describes the concept of the Maya Shakti and how Brahm employs it to create an illusion of duality in something that is non-dual. To quote—"He whose eclectic form is eternal and whose authority is well established, he who has revealed himself as the whole creation which is nothing but his own form, he who is self-illuminated and revealed in the form of light, he who is uniformly all-pervading, all-encompassing, universal and omnipresent—it is this unique and non-dual supreme and transcendental Brahm who has revealed himself in four forms by employing his cosmic power to create illusions, known as the 'Maya Shakti'. This Shakti enables Brahm to conjure up a magical world of miraculous finery and clarity that is so life-like and a virtual reality that one is unable to distinguish between its illusionary form and the actual reality that it hides.

This is why the four forms of the same Divinity known as Brahm are given four different names. Actually, they are the same Brahm appearing in all these four forms.

[It is like the same ‘sky’ being assigned different names depending upon its location—viz. the sky in an empty pitcher is called a ‘Ghata-kash’ (‘Ghat’ = pitcher; ‘Akash’ = sky), that within the walls of a monastery is called ‘Matha-kash’ (‘Matha’ = a monastery), that above the earth as the ‘Akash’, that beyond the gravitational pull of the earth as the ‘Maha-kash’, etc. But these are artificial boundaries created for the sky element which is otherwise an immutable, an indivisible, a uniform and a universal entity.

Another example can be cited of water contained in different containers or vessels being assigned different names—for instance we say ‘the water in the cup’, the ‘water of the jug’, the ‘water of the river or the ocean’ etc. Primarily, all samples of water are the same, and these different names do not change its basic nature or quality.

These four forms of Krishna are Gopal, Pradumna, Balraam and Aniruddha. There is no wonder in it. If Brahm can create this magnificent and fantastic world of stupendous variety and diverse aspects, shapes, colours and forms that continue to evolve endlessly and defy all imagination, it is a only child’s play, so to say, for him to replicate himself in merely four forms when he can replicate himself in millions and countless more million forms in this vast and endless creation.] (25).”

When a man understands any ‘Truth’ after rigorously examining the ‘truthfulness’ of that truth, when he has established the veracity of facts, he believes in it more firmly and more convincingly. No matter what other people tell him about the truth being not the correct or the whole truth, he would not listen to them, simply because he has verified the facts for himself, he has witnessed the truth himself, he has logically eliminated all falsehoods to deduce that what he knows is the ‘truthful Truth’. His Truth is based on rigid and solid foundation; he is unwavering and steady in it. If he is steadfast and convinced in his knowledge, no matter how much ignorance and delusions (Maya) try to push him away from the absolute ‘Truth’, he will remain steadfast and unwavering in it. There will be no doubts and confusions in his mind.

The basic idea here is that Maya is like a transparent coloured sheet which covers the supreme ‘truth’ in the creation. Since it is transparent, it assumes the attributes of the ‘truth’ that it covers, because for all practical purposes an ordinary man is unable to see that veil because of its transparency. But at the same time, being tinged by different Gunas, the view of the ‘truth’ as seen through the veil of Maya gets tainted or distorted consonantly. This is a simple way of understanding what is called ‘illusion and Maya vis-à-vis the Truth and Reality’. Maya nevertheless hides the truthfulness of the Truth, and instead lends its own attributes and characteristics to that Truth known as the ‘Nirgun Brahm’ by the Upanishads when the latter is observed through this veil, while at the same time assuming the glorious attributes of Brahm itself. So ignorant fools think that the Maya is the real thing, whereas they are actually seeing the ‘veiled truth’ as observed through this covering of Maya, because the actual ‘truth’ is hidden from view by this transparent sheet which has lend it its own colour and hue to it . As a result, that Nirgun appears to have some attributes, and it thereby becomes ‘Sagun’, or the one with attributes and characteristics, by the interference of Maya.

The Atharva Veda’s *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 33, 36, and Canto 5, verse no. 77 describe Maya as follows—

“Canto 4, verse no. 33 = The Lord of creation known as Maheshwar, i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm, is merely a neutral witness to everything without getting involved in any of the things and deeds in this world, without either enjoying anything or suffering from anything.

This Maheshwar is self-illuminated. Any sense of duality or difference or dichotomy that exists between this Lord and the Jiva (the creature) is imaginary and only out of the interfering Maya (delusions about the reality and truth).

When the Maya corrupts the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious; the faculty of reasoning and thoughts), the creature begins to think that such difference does exist, while when this Chitta is freed from the corrupting influences of Maya, these imaginary views vanish (33).

“Canto 4, verse no. 36 = It (Brahm; consciousness) lives as a self-illuminated entity inside the body (of the creature as the latter’s Atma), and is a witness to everything.

This eclectic and divine entity is witnessed and experienced by a Jiva (living being; a creature) who has become thoroughly clean and uncorrupt, and all the faults and shortcomings of whom have been completely eliminated.

On the contrary, when the Jiva is surrounded or covered by a veil of Maya¹ (delusions and its accompanying ignorance) he is not able to have any knowledge or awareness of this self-illuminated consciousness (representing Brahm) that is present in his inner-self. [This is like the case of a lamp being covered by a dark sheath. The light from the lamp would not be able to light the surrounding area, and any person standing even very close to the lamp would be in the same pitch darkness as the one who is miles away from it. This covering of Maya so much deludes and corrupts the mind-intellect and the sub-conscious that one begins to hallucinate and is unable to ‘see’ the truth from behind the curtain of falsehoods and illusions.] (36).

“Canto 5, verse no. 76 = The fact that though Brahm is characterized by the grand virtue of being non-dual, immutable, indivisible and constant (which is a steady refrain of all the Upanishads) it still appears to be in numerous forms that are always changing and so divergent in nature by revealing itself in the form of this world that has mind-boggling number of uncountable forms is because of the factor of Maya (i.e. the delusion-creating power of Brahm) that acts as a conditioning element that tampers with the real Truth. [That is, Brahm appears to be so different, or having a dual nature, because of the interference of Maya. This Maya creates an artificial distortion and prevents the reality to be known. It hides the Truth behind the smoke-screen of fallacious thinking, imaginations, delusions and misconceptions.]

It must not be forgotten that the Atma is fundamentally ‘one’ and ‘non-dual’, or Advaita, because it is Brahm personified.

[That is, it must never be thought that two individuals having two different gross bodies would have two different Atmas; that therefore there are as many ‘selfs/selves’ as there are creatures. The Atma is always ‘one’ and not ‘two or more’. The uncountable number of creatures is simply the uncountable number of bodies that this single Atma has assumed for itself.

The simplest way to understand this concept is to take the example of water. A molecule of water consists of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen, and its chemical formula is H_2O . For a chemist water would always mean H_2O , but a layman would differentiate between a sample of water in a cup and that in the river.

Water is also known by different names—viz. as liquid water, as any viscous fluid, as ice, vapour, moisture, mist, cloud or rain, as river, stream, sea, ocean, well,

pond, lake and so on. But a wise man knows and understands that all of them are one or the other form of the same element called ‘water’ having the same chemical formula.

Similarly, a wise and enlightened man would know that the Atma in all the creatures is one, and therefore such a man would treat all the creatures alike. On the contrary, an ignorant man would think that all creatures are independent individuals, and that they have separate identities that are unique to them. Of course this latter notion is superficially true because this world is conditioned by Maya to treat the external gross body as the identity of all living beings, but fundamentally it is wrong and based on fallacious premise. This is because the ‘true self’ of all the creatures is their Atma, the pure consciousness residing in their bodies, and not the gross body itself.]

Therefore, the Atma is universally Advaita or non-dual and one. The Atma has no delusions and misconceptions. It is not at all affected by any of the taints and delusions so characteristic of this gross world (76).”

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse no. 2-3 describes Maya and says that it is the creator, the sustainer and the concluder of creation. To quote—

“Verse no. 2 = Prajapati Brahma replied to the Gods—‘The ancient and most powerful Shakti or dynamic energy of Lord Nrisingh is called Maya (the power to create delusions), and it is with this Shakti that the visible world was created. [Therefore it follows that the world itself is a delusion like the illusionary world created by the magician using his magical powers. The concept of Maya has been elaborately explained in a separate appendix dealing with various Vedantic concepts at the end of this volume.]

It is this Maya Shakti that not only creates this world but also sustains it and becomes the cause of its conclusion. This is why this Maya is the inherent Shakti (dynamism; energy; active ingredient) of Lord Nrisingh’s Mantra. Once an aspirant becomes aware and well acquainted with all the aspects of this Maya, he becomes free from all sins¹, he obtains victory over death², and he accesses the eternal fount of blissfulness and blessedness called Amrit³.

Such a lucky man is able to cross over this ocean-like world and obtains all sorts of blessedness and spiritual prosperity (happiness, contentedness, peace, tranquility, blissfulness, beatitude and felicity) that one can hope for (2).

[Note—¹He overcomes sins because he would have realised that all the misdeeds he does to satisfy his desires and gratify himself by pursuing this material world of sense objects is like running after a mirage in the desert seeking water. This chase would hasten death because there is no water in the mirage. So, when a man becomes enlightened about the falsehood of the charms of this world, and the falsehood of the world itself, he would not do anything unrighteous and wrong just to satisfy himself at the cost of getting trapped in a vicious cycle of sufferings that would inevitably come in its wake. No one wants to suffer. He would also have realised the actual ‘truth’ in this creation and about his own self—that is, he would have become self-realised and enlightened. This development would pre-empt all inclinations of getting involved in sins and misdemeanours.

²He defeats death in the sense that he has nothing to fear from what would be his destiny when he leaves this mortal body because he is rest assured of his emancipation and salvation. Fear of death arises from fact that a man has to suffer from torments as a punishment for his recklessness and misdeeds in life. For instance, if a man does not take proper care of his health he would fall ill and suffer its

consequences. Binge eating or eating wrongly just to satisfy the taste buds makes a man conscious of the ill fate that awaits him, and this creates fears. So a sinful man is afraid of death and his destiny, the fate of where he would go after death. But a righteous man has no such fears. Further, a devotee of the Lord has taken the refuge of the supreme Lord and put himself in his custody, therefore he is sure of salvation. Being blessed by the Lord, he would have become sufficiently enlightened to realise that it is the body which dies and not the Atma which is his truthful 'self' and is pure consciousness that is an eternal and imperishable entity.

³It is obvious that with all these developments the spiritual aspirant would have found the eternal fount of peace and tranquility. This gives him access to the nectar of life called Amrit.]

"Verse no. 3 = Wise men wonder whether this Maya Shakti of the Lord is 'Hriswa/Hrasva', 'Dirgha' or 'Plut'. [These three words refer to the three aspects of creation. The word 'Hriswa/Hrasva' refers to the smallest step, the initial phase of anything, the beginning; the word 'Dirgha' refers to the most evolved, highly developed and widespread form of the same thing; and the word 'Plut' symbolises the basic or elementary form or the rudimentary form that remains at the end of conclusion and from which a fresh beginning is made.]

When the wise aspirant worships the Lord holistically and uses his divine Mantra for the purpose of meditation and contemplation, he is able to benefit from all these three aspects of the Maya Shakti. That is, the Hriswa/Hrasva aspect of the Lord's Maya Shakti helps to destroy all his sins and their consequences. As a result the aspirant obtains Amrit, the elixir of eternity and blessedness that gives infinite bliss and happiness. The Dirgha aspect of the Maya Shakti bestows upon him immense fame, good name, magnificence, grandeur, majesty, authority, prosperity and well being. He obtains Amrit which gives him all that he desires. And finally, the Plut aspect of Maya Shakti blesses him with wisdom and erudition which also makes Amrit accessible for him.

[Note—From the perspective of creation, the word 'Hriswa/Hrasva' refers to the small beginning of creation in the form of primary forms of life such as algae and fungi. The word 'Dirgha' refers to the most evolved, highly developed and widespread form such as the higher species of animals and the highest rung occupied by the humans. And the word 'Plut' symbolises the rudimentary forms left after the creation comes to an end, or the conclusion of the creation itself.

In the present context the word 'Hriswa/Hrasva' would mean making a small beginning by abstaining from sinful deeds and thoughts. The word 'Dirgha' would mean reaching the higher stage of auspiciousness and righteousness when one becomes perfect and immaculate. Obviously such a man acquires immense good name, powers and authority. And the word 'Plut' would refer to the ultimate state of enlightenment and self-realisation when nothing more is sought and needed.]"

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 9, says that Maya is a revelation of the dynamic powers and glories of Brahma, the creator, on display. It is a manifestation of Brahma in the sense that it reflects his dynamism and glories to create wonders out of nothing and real-life illusions that resemble the truth so much that it is hard to distinguish the false from the truth.

The *Swetashwatar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 10 states that—"Prakriti (primary Nature) should be treated as the Maya, and the supreme Lord called Maheshwar (one who is 'Maha'—great, and 'Ishwar'—Lord, of everything) as the maverick Lord who inspires and enables the

Maya to not only create this world but also imprint it with its own characteristic qualities (much like the offspring bearing the characters and features, or genes, of the parent).

Thus, the entire creation bears the characteristic qualities and virtues so typical and unique to Maya; these qualities and virtues form an integral character and nature of this creation as a whole as well as of all its individual units" (10).

Here it should be noted that the three inherent qualities or Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama that characterize all the creatures of this creation are like the genes that the offspring carries of its parent. Through these Gunas, the Maya resides in the bosom of all the creatures as their defining 'nature' and basic 'temperament'—called the Prakriti of the creature. Even as the supreme Brahm as the Great Lord called Maheshwar used his mystical deluding maverick powers to create this illusion of the world at the cosmic level and made it so perfect that it appears to be perfectly true, the same Brahm while residing in the bosom of the individual creature as its Atma also creates this world by using its delusion creating powers, and uses its man-Friday, the mind, to ensure that it is implemented to perfection.

The *Sarwasaaro-panishad*, verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes the concept of Maya in these terms—

"Verse no. 15 = The subtle, esoteric and mysterious but most astounding and potential cosmic powers wielded by this Brahm and the matching dynamic energy that it possesses, is called 'Maya¹'. This Maya is infinite, having no beginning and no end. [This is because it is a characteristic part of Nature and a manifestation of Brahm's supernatural powers. Since Brahm is infinite, Maya is also infinite.]

It makes its appearance when the time comes for the decay and destruction of anything in this world because it has a magnetic pull that spares none and pulls everything along with it towards their end. [Anything overshadowed by ignorance and delusions for which Maya is used as a metaphor, is sure to get to ruin, sooner or later.]

It is neither true nor false. [It is like a mirage, or an illusionary scene created on stage by an expert magician. It is so fabulous and make-belief that no one can accept that it is not true, and since it is actually seen on stage it therefore cannot be false either.]

It casts a veil of various faults around the creature, creating numerous flaws in the latter's character and nature, but it itself appears to be faultless and flawless. [Maya acts much like magic that creates so many extraordinary scenes but remains indifferent to them because magic is simply an art or science employed by the expert magician to implement the tricks that he has conjured up in his mind. The magician knows the trick behind these scenes and is therefore not interested in them. The art and science of magic is equally not concerned with what happens to the audience because it is simply acting on the instructions of the magician.]

Similarly, Maya creates numerous qualities and characteristics in creation, but it itself has none. [Maya is a manifestation of Brahm's dynamic powers to conceive, create, develop, wind up and destroy this creation. If the principal Brahm has no specific attributes and defining qualities that can be limiting for it, it is expected that Maya would also not exhibit any such attributes and qualities which are not possessed by its principal and originator, the Brahm. Maya is as indefinable as Brahm.]

This entity known as Maya is very deceitful and cunning in nature. It is lowly and scheming. It represents lack of knowledge, it is an embodiment of ignorance and delusions, and it is falsehood and illusions personified. But the irony is that stupid people with low intellect and wisdom think it to be true and real, as having a real

existence and very honest in its approach under all circumstances and in all three dimensions of time (i.e. in the past, the present and the future periods of time). [That is, foolish people think that since the Maya has its origin in Brahm, it would also be like Brahm. But they forget the fact that this Maya was willingly created by Brahm to act as an invisible tool in his hands to help create a situation whereby the creation created by him can go on perpetually moving on and on endlessly till the time Brahm decided to wind up the game. It is just like the art of magic employed by the magician to keep the show up and going till the time comes to wind up. No one in his wildest of imagination can say that the magician and the art of magic are one and the same entity. Similarly, Brahm has set up this cosmic show by employing Maya as a powerful tool.]

In other words therefore, 'Maya' is such a concept that is beyond definition and impossible to precisely comprehend much like its principal, the supreme transcendental Brahm. It is impracticable to construct any confirmed view about it and its nature. It is certainly most intractable and enigmatic entity related to this creation (15)."

The *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda tradition describes Maya in its verse nos. 24 and 31. Let us examine these verses and see what they say—

"verse no. 24 = The Lord's Maya (i.e. his delusion creating tricks and highly mystical powers) is so confounding and mysterious that no one can be certain about him or about anything related to him so much so that even I, Brahma the creator, and Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation, are mystified and most confounded and perplexed. It's very difficult to get out of the snare cast by this Maya. [Briefly, Maya is the delusion-creating power of Brahm, the Supreme Being. It was Maya that was used by Brahm to weave this fabric of creation just like a magician conjures up a magnificent scene on stage out of thin air.]

But this Maya can be easily got over with by remembering or meditating upon the holy lotus-like feet of the Lord. [In other words, if one takes the shelter of the Lord and surrenders himself to the Lord's holy feet, then the deluding effects of Maya do not touch such a devotee, Maya cannot cast its magical charm on him or in any way affect him because of the Lord's grace. Maya is regarded as a maid servant of the Lord, and when the Lord is pleased by someone it is natural that the maid servant would keep her hands off from such a person. This allusion is used in the famous devotional classical epic known as 'Ram Charit Manas' by the great saint Goswami Tulsidas, in its Uttar Kand/Canto 6 at two places—viz. (i) Doha no. 71 kha and its following Chaupai/verse no. 1, and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 117. Ram Charit Manas is a famous book describing the divine story of Lord Ram, popularly known by another name as the 'Ramayana'.] (24).

"verse no. 31 = Even the exalted Gods get trapped and deluded by the immense powers of the Lord's maverick Maya which cause such delusions as Mamta (having love and endearment for anything in this world inspite of being aware of its grossness, perishability, impermanence and falsehood) etc.—say, who can ever describe even a part of the immense magnitude and great reach of the Lord's enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious power known as Maya (31)."

The *Kathrudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 43 describes how Maya was created by the Supreme Being who is a personified form of the supreme Consciousness that is as 'Brahm', and how it is kept under tight leash by

him. To quote—“The divine entity that is transcendental and immaculate Consciousness and enlightenment personified cannot be affected or influenced by delusions and ignorance called Maya. At the same time, it remains free from the limitations that are inherent to all things that have a form and name that ignorance and delusions create in this world. [This world is a manifestation of the cosmic Consciousness called Brahm, both at the macrocosmic level of creation as well as at the microcosmic level as the individual creature. Everything that exists has a form, no matter how gross or subtle it might be. Similarly, each form is assigned a particular name by which it is recognized. These are like artificial limitations and parameters imposed on an entity that is innately not limited and bounded. For instance, we have so many names for water, such as ocean, sea, lagoon, lake, pond, well, river, puddle etc., but the element known as ‘water’ is much beyond these limited descriptions. No one form can describe ‘water’ in its entirety; at the most each name describes one of the numerous qualities of water. Likewise, Brahm has revealed itself as countless creatures with as many forms and names, but none of them define Brahm even by a fraction. At the most, they only depict one of its countless and infinite glories.]

Since everything in existence is created by the supreme Lord known as Ishwar, it follows that this Maya is also a creation of Ishwar. But being the Lord of Maya, the Ishwar keeps the latter under leash and subservient to him. Though this is true but still Maya would not desist from showing its maverick tricks as proved by the fact that the inherently detached and untainted Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being which has no attributes and names, comes to be known as an ‘Ishwar’ when associated by Maya. [Technically, the word Ishwar refers to the sum total of all the causal bodies in creation when considered at the macrocosmic level. The very fact of ‘having a body, causal or otherwise’ shows that Maya has influenced Brahm. The fact that this Brahm in association with Maya created the rest of the creation is clearly reflected in the word ‘causal body’ of Brahm known as Ishwar—i.e. the body which is the ‘cause’ of the rest of the things.]

Extending this logic further, when the originally enlightened Brahm allowed itself to be accompanied by Maya, the latter cast its dark shadow of ignorance on the former and this resulted in what is known as ‘Agyan’ to come into existence. Being under the influence of this Agyan—ignorance of its truthful divine nature and supreme stature—Brahm became a Jiva, i.e. it became an ordinary living being who is oblivious of his exalted lineage, and who remains engrossed in an endless cycle of delusions and ignorance (43).”

Maya is under the overall control of Ishwar, the Lord of creation—This fact has been emphasized in the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 10 as follows—‘The Maha Maya—or the dynamic powers of Ishwar (Brahm, the Supreme Being) that create delusions of stupendous proportions—is under the control and supervision of the Lord. The Maha Maya is obedient to its Lord, the Ishwar. [In fact, the Supreme Being is called ‘Ishwar’ because he is the ‘Lord of all’, including the Maya.]

The Maha Maya works in accordance to the wishes and desires of the Lord. It resolutely carries out what the Lord determines to do. The Maha Maya is eternally empowered by all the majestic and mystical powers and undiluted authority so that it can carry out the Lord’s wishes endlessly without interruption.

This Maha Maya is the great progenitor of other forms of endless Mayas which together create a web of delusions.

This Maha Maya is regarded as the magical body that Lord Vishnu assumes when the Lord wishes to do so and play around in a sporty manner. [That is why the various magical feats done by different incarnations of Vishnu are regarded as the Lord's Maha Maya doing them. It is the delusory affect of the Maha Maya that the world believes that Vishnu has taken the form of a human etc. and done this and done that. Actually it is the Lord's Maya that does it for him.]

The Maha Maya is so un-imaginably great in its reach and import that even the world's creator known as Brahma (who is so wise that he created the Vedas, the repository of all knowledge and wisdom) cannot understand and fathom it.

Those who worship Lord Vishnu and are devoted to him are able to overcome the affects of Maha Maya and easily cross it. [That is, Maha Maya is not able to cast its delusory net on them.]

On the other hand, those who do not have any devotion for Lord Vishnu cannot overcome this great Maha Maya inspite of their best of efforts (10)."

In Gowami Tulsidas' epic *Ram Charit Manas*, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 41, Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being, declares—

dōhā.

sunahu tāta māyā kṛta guna aru dōṣa anēka.
guna yaha ubhaya na dēkhi'ahim dēkhi'a sō abibēka. 41.

Lord Ram told Bharat, "Oh dear, listen! Maya (delusions) has created numerous qualities, both the good and the bad.

It is better not to take any notice of them, for once one begins to see them he gets sucked in the vortex of confusions that will cause consternations and vexations for him, and this will be equivalent to his being overcome by 'A-vivek' or ignorance. [Doha no. 41.]"

[Note—The concept of 'Maya' has been elaborately discussed later on in Ram Charit Manas when the saint crow Kaagbhusund has preached Garud, the legendary Eagle and mount of Lord Vishnu when the latter had approached the former to remove certain doubts and confusions that has arisen in his mind. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand—(i) from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 117. Refer also to Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 44.]

The concept of 'Maya' has been beautifully explained in the *Ram Charit Manas*, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 44, Lord Ram says that—

phirata sadā māyā kara prērā. kāla karma subhāva guna ghērā. 5.

"A Jiva (the creature; the living being) keeps on wandering endlessly and aimlessly under the influence of Maya because it keeps him wrapped in a veil of falsehood that in turn keeps the Jiva away from the knowledge of Truth. Therefore, the Jiva is caught in a virtual whirlpool consisting of Kaal (time and circumstances), Karma (deeds, past and present), Swabhaava (nature, temperament and habit), and Gunas (characters that are controlled by the three Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama)¹". (5)

[Note—The Jiva is caught in a vice. He keeps on turning round and round in circle under the hallucinating affects of the factors mentioned here—Kaal, Karma, Swabhaava and Gunas. This happens because Maya—the delusions that prevent the creature from realizing the truth about his own ‘self’ as being the Atma that is eternal, free from all corruptions, a most sublime and subtle entity known as ‘consciousness’ that is separate from the gross body which the creature erroneously thinks to be his ‘self and identity’—holds the creature in its firm grip.

Having mistakenly identified himself with the gross body and the world in which this body lives, the Jiva willingly allows himself to be affected by the factors of time and circumstance, of deeds and their consequences, both good and bad, of his inherent nature, inclinations and temperament that are driven by the combined effect of the three qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama that are present in all living beings in differing proportions.]

In the following chapters we shall be reading more about this mysterious entity known as the ‘Maya’. It is important to note that in the field of metaphysics or any other philosophy, or for that matter any field of learning and knowledge, one should understand the underlying principles and look at a subject from different angles to get a comprehensive idea of what is being discussed and attempted to be known. So it is imperative to read all the chapters to get an idea what actually Maya is.

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“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

(As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’)

Chapter 2

The Various Forms of Maya

As we have seen in Chapter 1, ‘Maya’ is a complex phenomenon. It has many facets, takes many forms, and has many names. In this Chapter we are going to study them under separate sub-heads.

Section 2.1: The 3 forms of Maya—

Maya has three subtle forms, hence it is called *Trigunamayi Maya*. These forms represent the three basic constituent qualities of creation, called the Gunas, that give Maya its inherent nature and characteristic quality. These three Gunas are—Sata, Raja and Tama. ‘Sata’ is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvement leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. ‘Raja’ is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. ‘Tama’ is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used has a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, ‘Tama’ means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These three qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of ‘Sata’ makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of ‘Tama’ which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanors and mental setup in this world.

The ‘Trigunamayi Maya’ is classified into three sub-classes—viz. Sata Guni Maya, Raja Guni Maya, and Tama Guni Maya. This nomenclature depends upon the dominance of one or the other of the three Gunas in any given situation. Thus, when the Maya is dominated by the Sata Guna, it is called ‘Sata Guni Maya’; when it is dominated by the Raja Guna, it is called ‘Raja Guni Maya’; and when it is dominated by the Tama Guna, it is called ‘Tama Guni Maya’.

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 10, describes these three types of Maya as follows—"The Maya that has the Tama Guna in dominance is represented by Rudra (the angry form of Shiva that brings about destruction and annihilation of creation).

The Maya that has the Sata Guna in dominance is represented by Vishnu (the sustainer, protector and the benevolent care-taker of creation).

The Maya that has the Raja Guna in dominance is represented by Brahma (the creator who indulged in the tricky job of creating all sorts of delusions and illusions, as well as the world with all its material sense objects and the subjects that would populate it and enjoy it, thereby keeping the creator engrossed in its magical charms).

The Maya that has a combination of the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna dominating in equal proportion, with the Sata Guna taking the back seat, is represented by Indra and other Gods. None of the Gods in the countless number of Gods in the pantheon can be said to possess Satvic qualities—i.e. none of them can be cited as an example of exemplary qualities of virtuousness, nobility, auspiciousness, righteousness, truthfulness, holiness, piety, purity, chastity, incorruptibility, trustworthiness, sincerity, honesty and other good virtues that the Sata Guna stands for.

Out of this pantheon of Gods it is only Lord Aghor (Shiva) who stands out as being neutral, full of equanimity and indifferent to the effects of one or the other Gunas in the true sense. [That is, he is not at all influenced by the dominance of one or the other Gunas. His character is absolutely steady and untainted because it is not at all affected by the characteristic influences of any of the three Gunas. This is why Lord Shiva is equated with Brahm, the Supreme Being. This is also why he is called 'Maheshwar'—the Great Lord, an epithet not even applied to Vishnu who so loves the creation.] (10)."

The Atharva Veda's *Krishna Upanishad*, verse nos. 4-5, however, gives a slightly different view of Maya vis-à-vis the three Gunas as follows—"Maya (the dynamic power of the Supreme Being to create delusions) is said to be of three kinds—viz. Satvic, Rajsic and Tamasic depending upon the ratio of the three Gunas that is dominant in any one of its three aspects. Out of these, the Satvic Maya is said to be the foremost and the first one, the Rajsic the second one, and Tamsic the third and the lowest one.

The Satvic Maya is the dominant character of Lord Shiva, also known as Rudra, who is the most ardent and the wisest devotee of the Lord. [This is why Lord Shiva is also known as Mahadeva, the Great God. Inspite of his cosmic role as being the ruthless and uncompromising concluder of creation, he is known to be of an exemplary calm disposition and peaceful temperament, submerged always in contemplation and meditation. Sata Guna inculcates the great virtues of renunciation and enlightenment in the entity that possesses it, so Shiva is the most dispassionate and enlightened of all the Gods. This makes him the patron deity of ascetics.]

Brahma, the creator, has Rajsic Maya as the dominant character. [Raja Guna is concerned with creation and constant involvement in it. This is the function of Brahma.]

The demons had the Tamasic Maya as the dominant character. [Tama Guna creates the tendency to be evil and sinful, characters unique to the demons.]

Thus, Maya is said to be of three kinds, and since the entire creation is a product of Maya it too has these three characteristics in it.

Besides these three forms there is the Maya which is the primary form of Maya from which these three have evolved. This primary Maya is directly related to

Lord Vishnu, hence called the ‘Vaishnavi Maya’. It is sort of the parent of all the other forms of Maya. It is so powerful and so strong that no one can ever defeat it; not even Brahma the creator could overcome it. [This is the reason why Brahma, though being the creator of the Vedas—which are supposed to be a repository of all knowledge in creation—could not comprehend who Narayan or Vishnu was. This fact is amply clear in Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad in which Narayan himself taught the creator the truth of his (Narayan’s) divine Self.] (4-5).”

Besides classifying Maya based on the dominance of any of the three fundamental qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama in a given entity in creation, it has also been assigned other names as follows—

(a) Maha Maya—The great powers exhibited by Brahm at the cosmic level is known as ‘Maha Maya’. The word “Maha” means ‘great, and “Maya” of course refers to ‘delusions’. Hence, ‘Maha Maya’ is the great cosmic delusion. This Maya is the progenitor of all other types of Mayas which keep the individual creature trapped in their net. The Maha Maya is the virtual mistress of all the delusions and misconceptions and their attendant ignorance that keep all the creatures of this creation enthralled by their deceptive charm.

The concept of the Maha-Maya or the great delusion can be understood with a simple illustration. The air element is the same within the earth’s atmosphere, but the density of air near the earth’s surface is obviously more than the highest point of the atmosphere. Even the level of the various gases and other ingredients of air vary at different levels. Hence, as we move up from the surface of the earth, the ingredients of the air, their density, ratio and properties, change, but primarily they will always remain collectively a part of the air element, inalienable from it, while still retaining their unique virtues which might be different from the air as we understand it to mean. Likewise, the same Supreme Being known as Brahm exists throughout this creation in all its different levels, and this Brahm exhibits different sets of characteristics at each level. It is only the degree of grossness and subtlety that changes, and not the primary nature of Brahm. The fact that Brahm appears to change and exhibit different characteristics other than its original attributes at different planes of creation or existence is called ‘Maha Maya’—or, the great delusion.

(b) Yog Maya—This is the stupendous magical powers created by the union of the supreme authority of creation known as Brahm, and the mystical and esoteric powers that delusions and hallucinations can create for the creature.

In order to understand the term ‘Yog Maya’, let us examine its two component parts—viz. Yoga and Maya. ‘Yoga’ means meditation and contemplation, while ‘Maya’ refers to the cosmic energy and delusions created by the Lord at the time of creation. ‘Yog’ also means union or conjunction or fusion of two entities. Therefore, Yogmaya refers to the fusion of the cosmic energy with the delusion-creating powers of the supreme Brahm when he did decide to start the process of creation. The illusion created by him removed the distinction between the truth and falsehood so much so that both appeared the same and became interchangeable. That is why, what appears true on the surface is actually false, and vice versa. But to enable this to happen, Brahm had to meditate and focus his attention to ignite that inherent but latent energy that is an integral part of creation. In other words, he had to do Tapa, which is another form of Yoga. The resultant stupendous forces of Nature that were unleashed by

Brahm's meditation led to the chain of events that culminated in the revelation of the cosmos as it is known today. This magnificent event or the primary force that set this chain in motion has been conceptualized by the Purans as a deity known as 'Yog Maya'; she has been depicted by them as the female counterpart of the maverick Lord of creation, who has been personified as the Viraat Purush. In the case of Lord Ram, who is that Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu, that Yog Maya is represented by Sita. The other connotation of 'union' implies that this Yog Maya establishes a link between the ignorant and deluded creature, and the unadulterated, supreme and ultimate Truth represented by the Lord. The word also refers to the magical and mystical powers displayed by mystics and ascetics, which they have acquired by the virtue of their meditation and contemplation.

We can understand this phenomenon of how the Maya of the Lord has created this vast canvas of creation with a simple example. A painter wishes to paint a landscape. He starts with a pure white canvas, and using his imagination and powers to visualise a magnificently beautiful scene, he starts painting with numerous primary colours and then goes on mixing these colours to produce umpteen numbers of colours of varying hues and shades. Besides the colour, he continuously adds a stroke here and a brush there as he tries to reveal on the lifeless canvas the conception of life as he visualises in his mind; he is never satisfied with his work and goes on and on endlessly adding colours and lines to the canvas. The result is most astounding and stupendous to behold. But still the painter is not satisfied; so the net result is that the canvas gets being redone over and over again, and layers after layers of lines that had been made and erased, of paints that had been painted over numerous times, of shapes and figures that had been visualised, rejected and reconceived and placed on the canvas only to make the painter uneasy about them. In short, the basic canvas that was pristine pure at the beginning has been reduced to scrap! The painter then keeps it aside or if totally disgusted with it, he may throw it in the garbage bin.

This all but sums up how the supreme Lord creates, develops and concludes the creation. The clean white canvas represents the Satwic qualities with which the Atma starts out. The painter is the supreme Lord or Brahm, the landscape he imagines is equivalent to Maya because it has no actual existence but is imagined by him, and he is so skilled a painter that once the painting is ready, the scene that is depicted on the canvas appears to be very real and live, creating an illusion of the grandeur of the actual thing; this is a deception because the painter has used his imagination as the subject of the painting, but an ignorant man who is not aware of this fact would believe that the painting has been inspired by some actual landscape that the painter must have seen somewhere. As a matter of fact, it might also happen that the scene does actually exist, but the painter has added touches of his own imagination to add vibrancy and colour to the scene about which the observer is unaware. The scene and the 3-dimensional landscape is equivalent to the creation and the colourful Nature. The paint and the primary colours used by the Lord during the process of creation to make it vibrant and lively are the different Gunas (virtues, qualities and characteristics), the various Vasanas (desires and passions) and Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations of a creature; his nature and temperaments) as well as the Tattwas (elements) which are fundamental to and inseparable from creation. The innumerable varieties of shades of characters, virtues and qualities that are present in the creature represent these myriad colours that the creator uses to paint his creation. Until at last the Lord stands back and is stumped at the Frankenstein Monster that he has unleashed! Then he decides to call it quits, and this is equivalent to annihilation of

the creation. But as a painter he cannot sit quiet; and so starts the process once all over again!

Supposing the painter did not add his own name to the painting, or he had added a pseudonym. Then in such a case, there would be conjectures about his identity, leading to so many theories and debates. Then some wise man would look up the archives and dig up some evidence about who he was. This is exactly what happens here in the case of creation—no one knows for sure who that creator is, what is his name, etc. Some wise and enlightened man came to unearth the truth about him, and he tried to tell others in the words he could muster. This is how the great maverick Lord has been known and recognized by us. When his glories are sung, it is actually praising the great painter for his skills and the matchless heritage that he has created for us to cherish and behold.

(c) *Maha Yoga Maya*—The phrase *Maha Yog Maya* combines the meanings of three words, i.e. ‘*Maha*’, ‘*Maya*’ and ‘*Yoga*’. ‘*Maya*’ means delusions, and ‘*Yoga*’ means to bring about a union between any two entities, and of course ‘*Maha*’ means ‘great’. Hence, the great delusion which is so powerful that it brings together two impossibilities together, and makes them appear to be real is called ‘*Maha Yog Maya*’.

For instance, this world is not the ‘absolute truth’ because anything that is ‘true’ would remain constant and unchanging. Since the world is changing every moment, it cannot be the absolute truth. Therefore it is false. Truth and False are opposite things just like fire and water; they cannot co-exist. If one thing is true, it cannot be false, and vice versa. But *Maha Maya* is so powerful that the creature is certain that this world with all its sense objects and charms is true and real. He sees others dying but thinks that he would live forever. Since bringing together of two things is called ‘*Yoga*’, this bringing together of two impossible things together to make them appear to be true and possible, or making the truth appear as false on the one hand while making false appear to be true on the other hand, is called ‘*Maha Yog Maya*’.

The *Sita Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 5 says that Sita—who is a personified form of the cosmic Shakti of Brahm that is represented by goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu who is also known as the ‘*Viraat Purush*’, the all-encompassing and all-pervading cosmic form of the supreme Consciousness known in its subtlest form as ‘*Brahm*’—is a manifestation of the ‘*Maha Maya*’.

The *Sita Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 3 says that Sita, who is a personified form of the cosmic Shakti of Brahm, is a manifestation of the ‘*Yog Maya*’.

Now, let us read what these two verses of *Sita Upanishad* say—

“Verse no. 3 = Sita is the virtual ‘soul’ or *Atma* of the entire gamut of creation having three aspects. Therefore she is called ‘*Trivarnaatma*’, or the soul of all those things which have three plains, phases, forms, connotations, facets or aspects in creation. [The creation has been envisioned as one having three plains of existence. The *Atma*, the pure consciousness, lives in all these three plains. Without the *Atma* the creation is as good as dead or non-existent. Sita is ‘*Trivarna-Atma*’ because she represents this *Atma* having three forms. She represents the dynamic Shakti of Brahm

known as ‘consciousness’ that makes each of the three facets of the diverse creation active and bear life in their individual forms.]

Sita is also, at the same time, a personification of Yog Maya (which refers to the astounding powers of Brahm or the Supreme Being to create delusions).”

“Verse no. 5 = Sita, whose esoteric and enigmatic but sublime cosmic form is symbolised by the long vowel sound ‘Ee’ (as in *eel*), and who is the great dynamic Shakti called ‘Maha Maya¹’ that has no specific form, shape and attribute at the cosmic level of creation, reveals her primarily invisible divine form as the one having a visible shape and form that possesses specific attributes, glorious virtues and magnificent qualities which are equivalent to Amrit (i.e. are as refined and of high quality as nectar). In this revealed form (as the divine consort of Lord Ram), she is adorned by so many splendid ornaments and other decorative paraphernalia that gives a magnificent, charming and a radiant dimension to her divine form (5).”

The *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 6, paragraph no. 13 describes how a spiritual aspirant sees the “Maha Yog Maya” in a personified form as he proceeds on his journey towards his final Mukti or Moksha.

To quote—“Then he reaches the place where he encounters the ‘Maha Yog Maya’ of Lord Vishnu (i.e. the great delusion-creating powers of the Lord) in a personified form.

This Maha Yog Maya is so powerful that it creates an illusion of dichotomy and opposition in the various forms of the eternal supreme Brahm who is an embodiment of infinite bliss.

[Brahm is indivisible, immutable, non-dual and one. Though Brahm has assumed as many diverse forms as they are independent units in creation, each unique in its self and different from its neighbour, and is given so many that they numbers run into thousands, yet Brahm is one and non-dual. All these varied forms and shapes of Brahm are nothing but like the same colour having many hues and shades. They are like the same letter of the alphabet that is used in countless permutations and combinations to form hundreds and thousands of words. The immense diversity creates doubts in the mind of a thinking person as to the reality of Brahm, whether what is said of Brahm as being non-dual and immutable is true or whether it is false. This creates a lot of confusion, perplexity, restlessness and doubts in the mind of the aspirant about the reality and authenticity of Brahm, thereby robbing his peace of mind and its attendant bliss. A man torn between reality and falsehood can never find rest and happiness; he can never find spiritual bliss and mental peace.]

This Maha Yog Maya is like a veil surrounding the truth of Brahm. The magical world created by it is most fascinating and highly astonishing; it is full of maverick tricks, and is like an ocean of surprises which is full of unexpected events and sights. It is so mysterious that inspite of being illusionary and created out of delusions it still appears to be real and everlasting; it appears to be an image of happiness inspite of its horrifying whirlpools of miseries and pains, of turmoil and turbulence.

[That is, though the world created by Maya is illusionary and therefore all its charms are also illusionary, it appears to be so true and real that the creature falls prey to its charms and allows himself to be trapped by it. The deluded creature thinks it to be permanent and a source of happiness and pleasures. He therefore yearns for its sense objects that provide comfort, pleasure and joys, thinking that by acquiring them he would be so much comfortable, richer and happier. But he forgets that a source that itself is illusionary, that has no existence, can never provide anything that is real and

has any truthful value. When he discovers that he has not got what he had expected or yearned for, or that things go on changing every other day and his earlier possessions become outdated the next day, he feels dismayed and distraught. He wants more and still more. This never-ending cycle can obviously not give peace and rest to anyone. It is like a thirsty man running behind the mirage in the desert in search of water which he never finds. Thus, the ‘great delusion’ that is so powerful and sweeping in its reach, import and effects that it can actually bring about a fusion of the truthful with the falsehood so as to make what appears as the ‘real thing’ is known as the ‘Maha Yog Maya’.]

The illusion created by this Maha Maya is so effective that the eternal and real Vaikunth (the abode of Lord Vishnu) appears to have a duplicate form as reflected in the great ocean of Avidya (ignorance) created in this illusionary world of ‘Maha Maya’.

[It is very important to understand the import of what is being said here. A deluded worshipper thinks that there is a physical Vaikunth high up in the heaven where a physical God known as Vishnu lives. For him, this Vishnu is the almighty Lord of creation. Well, both this Vaikunth and its Lord Vishnu are not the real Vaikunth and Vishnu that the Upanishads talk about as being the true destination of spiritual aspirants who seek emancipation and salvation by finding the Supreme Being known as Brahm. What they perceive as Vaikunth is not the real destination of the soul because of their ignorance of the reality, and what they think is Vishnu is not the real Lord who is the Supreme Being of creation. This is because the ‘real’ Vishnu who is synonymous with Brahm is eternal and imperishable, but the Vishnu who relates to the fourth Paad of Brahm has a beginning and an end. This is clearly laid out in Canto 3, paragraph no. 10-11. Thus, this Vishnu is not the eternal and immortal Vishnu who is Brahm, the Supreme Being. If this Vishnu is not the real Brahm, then how can his abode called Vaikunth be the real Vaikunth? The real emancipation and salvation is known as ‘Kaivalya Mukti’ when the individual’s Atma, his ‘pure consciousness’ merges with the supreme Consciousness. This may happen even without leaving the gross body, in which case is called ‘Jivan Mukti’, as well as by leaving the body when it is called ‘Videha Mukti’. The gross body is made of five elements such as the sky or the subtle spaces that are present between cells and tissues, the air or the vital winds that keep the body alive, the fire or energy that keeps the body activated and energised, the water or the fluid part of the body, and the earth or the grossest part that make up the skin, bones, flesh and nerves and veins etc. When the ‘consciousness’ leaves the body, the latter automatically disintegrates into its components. This ‘consciousness’ is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. Hence, the real Vaikunth is inside one’s own self, and the real Vishnu is the Supreme Being residing in one’s own inner self as the Atma. The body itself is a cosmos in a miniature form. If one has not become ‘self-realised’, he cannot become Brahm-realised, and therefore all notions of Mukti and Moksha that he might have, or the belief that there is some physical heaven in the sky where some God lives is just as illusionary as the world in which he lives! This is the great message of this paragraph. It is in strict consonant with the doctrines and philosophy expounded in and espoused by the Upanishads.] (13).”

Section 2.2: The 4 forms of Maya—

Maya is said to be of three kinds, viz. the one where Sata Guna dominates, called the Satvic Maya, the one where Raja Guna dominates, called the Rajsic Maya, and the one where Tama Guna dominates, called the Tamsic Maya. Beyond these three is the primary and the most ancient form of Maya, known as the ‘Adi Maya’. This ‘Adi Maya’ is also known as ‘Vaishnavi Maya’—the Maya of Lord Vishnu who is regarded as the ‘Adi-Purush’, the primary Male of creation from whom the rest of the creation has emerged.

There should be no confusion about Vishnu here. He is the most subtle form of Brahm, the latter being the name of the supreme Consciousness at the cosmic level of creation. Brahm remains neutral and is nothing but pure cosmic Consciousness. But when this Consciousness decided to initiate the process of creation it had to assume some form, no matter how subtle, sublime and imperceptible it was. Vishnu represents the first form that the cosmic supreme Consciousness took at the very initial stages of creation. For all practical purposes, Vishnu had all the characteristics of Brahm. Hence, Vishnu has the colour of the sky as his complexion because Brahm is said to be all-pervading and he permeates every pore and corner of creation like the sky. That is also why Vishnu is called ‘Viraat Purush’. The word ‘Viraat’ means vast and colossus, and ‘Purush’ means a Male. That is also the reason why Vishnu is called the Father of creation.

Now obviously, the primary Male needed some sort of dynamic power and the energy to start the process of creation. This was his ‘Shakti’.

Vishnu knew that in he is about to create something in the vast void of the cosmos. He had imagined in his mind that the creation he was about to give shape would be in a certain form and shape, and it would have certain features and characters. Everything was imaginary and started on a clean slate of Vishnu’s mind just like an artist conceptualizes some scene and then goes about giving shape to his ideas. This is why this creation is said to be made out of ‘Maya’—delusions.

Now, as it happened, Vishnu was an expert artisan, and the product of his imagination and efforts were so perfect and life-like that Vishnu himself got deluded. He began to think the product of his mind and its power to imagine as the real thing. So, Vishnu got entangled in the care of this world.

In ancient scriptures, a lot of symbolism is used to portray basic principles. Usually if we don’t understand the underlying theory, we are greatly confused. This is typical with Hinduism. The idea of Vishnu as being Brahm on the one hand, and his being the creator on the other hand has been synthesized in the portrait of Vishnu reclining peacefully and floating on the surface of the celestial ocean on a serpent’s coiled body, and the creator of the physical world, known as ‘Brahma’, emerging atop a lotus flower that sprouting from the reclining Vishnu’s navel.

Remember: According to the Upanishads of Yoga, the navel is the center of the Nabhi Kanda and Nabhi Chakra, respectively being the knot of nerves in the body from where all the nerves are controlled, and the center of energy in the body which controls all its functions. The symbolism is very obvious to see and understand.

Then we also read in the scriptures that Vishnu had taken many forms, called incarnations of Vishnu of which there are said to be 24 in total, Lord Krishna and Lord Ram being two human ones. So, Krishna and Ram are the grosser forms of Vishnu. These two forms of Vishnu had used their respective powers of creating delusions to overcome evil forces on earth, represented by the different denominations

of demons. This is the microcosmic picture. When the same principle is applied to the entire cosmos or to the entire creation as a whole when we deal with the principal entity known as Vishnu, then obviously the same delusion-creating power is called 'Vaishnavi Maya'.

Therefore, in the context of the subject of our discussion, the power of Vishnu that the Lord used to create and control the entire creation, including the gods etc., is called the 'Vaishnavi Maya' because it pertains to Lord Vishnu.

For this reason we find that the 'Adi Maya' has been called "Vaishnavi Maya" in the *Krishna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse nos. 4-5 because this Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Krishna who was an incarnation of Vishnu

Now let us read how it describes the 'Adi Maya' by calling it "Vaishnavi Maya"—

"Maya (the dynamic power of the Supreme Being to create delusions) is said to be of three kinds—viz. Satvic, Rajsic and Tamasic depending upon the ratio of the three Gunas that is dominant in any one of its three aspects. Out of these, the Satvic Maya is said to be the foremost and the first one, the Rajsic the second one, and Tamsic the third and the lowest one.

The Satvic Maya is the dominant character of Lord Rudra (Shiva) who is the most ardent and the wisest devotee of the Lord. [This is why Lord Shiva is also known as Mahadeva, the Great God, inspite of his role as being the ruthless and uncompromising concluder of creation. Sata Guna inculcates the great virtues of renunciation and enlightenment in the entity that possesses it, so Shiva is the most dispassionate and enlightened of all the Gods.]

Brahma, the creator, has Rajsic Maya as the dominant character. [Raja Guna is concerned with creation and constant involvement in it. This is the function of Brahma.]

The demons had the Tamasic Maya as the dominant character. [Tama Guna creates the tendency to be evil and sinful, characters unique to the demons.]

Thus, Maya is said to be of three kinds, and since the entire creation is a product of Maya it too has these three characteristics in it.

Besides these three forms there is the Maya which is the primary form of Maya from which these three have evolved. This primary Maya is directly related to Lord Vishnu, hence called the 'Vaishnavi Maya'. It is sort of the parent of all the other forms of Maya—the "Adi Maya". It is so powerful and strong that no one can ever defeat it; not even Brahma the creator could overcome it. [This is the reason why Brahma, though the creator of the Vedas which are supposed to be a repository of all knowledge in creation, could not comprehend who Narayan or Vishnu was. This fact is amply clear in Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad as well as in Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad.] (4-5)."

Section 2.3: The 8 forms of Maya—

The eight forms of Maya are the delusion and ignorance creating powers of Brahm without which the creation would neither be conceived nor expanded, because if everyone becomes aware of the reality, if everyone realises that everything is perishable and immaterial, that whatever is seen and enjoyed are like a mirage seen in a desert, then all would renounce the world, there would be no marriages and procreation, there would be no creation of wealth and strife and tension to protect this wealth, there would be no desire to have dominance over others, for all are equal and

one in the eyes of Brahm and they have the same Atma which prevails uniformly in the breadth and length of the creation. So Brahm uses Maya as a tool to maintain a veil of ignorance and delusions to carry forward his game plan, until the time he decides that he had had enough of it and then initiates the folding-up process of concluding this creation for good, or for at least that time when he decides to roll the carpet once again.

Now, these eight forms that Maya takes are the following—the five elements forming the basic building blocks of the gross creation (i.e. the elements of earth, water, fire, air and space which form the gross body of all the living creatures) + mind + intellect (together called the subtle body of the creature) + Ahankar (the ego, pride and arrogance that the creature possesses, leading to the notion of 'I', 'me', or 'mine' = eight entities.

Actually, a wise man understands that whatever exists in whatever form is nothing but one or the other form of the same universal entity known as Brahm. To take an example, a scientist knows that water in whatever form and colour and shape consists of the same two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen. Further, he also realises that everything is made of atoms and their basic structure consists of sub-atomic particles such as electron, proton, neutron etc. With this erudition and view point, a wise man sees these basic ingredients in all things that he observes around him, because everything is made up of atoms and molecules. But an ordinary man talks of the water of the ocean, of the well, of the drain and of the river etc. He talks of gold, of silver, of wood or of iron, not realizing that all consist of the same building block called the 'Atom'.

Similarly, due to ignorance a man is deluded into thinking that the gross world that he sees is has an independent existence and it is real. He forgets to analyse its fundamental ingredient which is the pure consciousness that is making it alive. The five elements that are used to make up this world are all perishable and gross, and they are the creation of the mind. The mind itself is perishable because it dies with the body. Then, what is the reason why a man has so much ego and pride in himself and his abilities? It is Maya. It is his ignorance that has held him by his collars, as it were. He forgets that if his true self is imperishable, then how come he dies; if his true self is enlightened and wise, then why he suffers from so much misery and disillusionment; if his true self is eternal, then why does he have to take a birth and then die? A wise man then begins to ponder why does he treat those entities which are transient, mortal and the cause of so much misery and consternations and confusions as true; why does he not realise that the truth is imperishable and eternal and universal? This is due to the influence of delusions and ignorance created by Maya. This is how Maya keeps everyone trapped under its net.

Section 2.4: The Maya Shakti—

The stupendous powers of Maya have been called its 'Shakti', the "Maya Shakti". This concept has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 48 as follows—"The cosmic 'Maya Shakti' (i.e. the great power of the Supreme Being to create delusions and keep the creature engrossed in its deceptions so that the cycle of creation set in motion by the Lord continues to roll on unhindered) is the grosser revelation of the dynamic powers of Brahm by which the latter created this illusion called the world. It is said to be located in the front part of the forehead and is shaped like a lotus¹. In the middle of this lotus is located the

transcendental cosmic energy of Brahm which is subtle in nature and is called the Naad Shakti² (48).

[Note—¹This symbolic lotus refers to the Agya Chakra. The forehead symbolically represents the head-light of Brahm much like we have headlights in a car because the eyes of the man's body are located here. The eyes help the man to see the visible creation of Brahm which the latter has created using his maverick powers to create illusions, the power called Maya Shakti which literally means precisely this—illusion creating strength and powers. This world is the gross physical revelation of Brahm's stupendous powers to create anything desired. Maya Shakti refers to this power of Brahm—to create an illusion which is so perfect and life-like that it appears to be true from all practical view points though it is basically an illusion. This is the great mystery of creation—the world is said to be illusionary on the one hand, and it is pervaded by Brahm who is not an illusion on the other hand. The secret is that the external features of the world as we see is an illusion just like the water seen in the desert mirage, but the underlying principle that creates this illusion in the desert is a scientific truth having a sound reason. Likewise, the world is created by the ability of the mind to imagine, which is actually Brahm's maverick power on display. Brahm is regarded as being synonymous with wisdom, erudition, enlightenment and knowledge, so the subtle quality of the mind-intellect complex to be analytical, discerning, thinking intelligently, weighing all the pros and cons and then making decisions and arriving at conclusions—these qualities are the subtle revelations of Brahm. But the power of this same mind to imagine and create a astoundingly fascinating world of charming and enticing objects is a revelation of Brahm's Maya Shakti. The man sees this illusions through his eyes situated in the forehead, and this fact is represented here by saying that the 'Maya Shakti is located in the front of the forehead'.

²As compared to this Maya Shakti which has taken a gross form of the physical world having attributes and characteristic features, the Naad Shakti is very subtle and has no physical shape or form or attributes. This is because Naad refers to the sound element which does not have any shape or form. It is like the air and sky elements which too have no form or shape. Since sound is a form of invisible energy, it is the first subtle revelation of Brahm at the cosmic level. Scientists call it the 'Big Bang' at the time of creation, while in the sphere of metaphysics it is called 'Naad'—both refer to sound. The concept of Naad and its origin in a point source called the 'Bindu' or dot have been explained extensively elsewhere in this Upanishad as well as in other Upanishads dealing with Naad and Bindu.]

This Maya is so powerful that it misleads even the Gods as stated in *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 24 which says—“Remaining stunned and under the magical spell cast by the Great God Shambhu's (Shiva's) Maya (delusion creating powers)¹, even the exalted Gods and other learned creatures are unable to have any idea who that Great God is. They are unable to know anything about him or get acquainted with the reality of this Great God who is the universal Guru (moral preceptor, wise and learned teacher and expert spiritual guide) for the entire living world.”

The *Sita Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition says that Goddess Sita is a manifestation of the Maya Shakti of Brahm—as 'Yog Maya' in verse no. 3, and as 'Maha Maya' in verse no. 5.

In this context, refer to the heading 'Yog Maya' and 'Maha Maya' in this Chapter 2, sub-head 2.1

The power of Maya, the ‘Maya Shakti’, has been described by Lord Ram in *Ram Charit Manas*, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72 which says that Maya is so powerful that it makes the world dance to its tune.

Maya had even deluded Sati, the consort of Lord Shiva, who had thought that Lord Ram was an ordinary prince inspite of Shiva trying to convince her that Ram was a personified form of Brahm—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Sortha/Doha no. 51 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4.

Here we read that when Sati did not pay heed to her husband’s council and was doubtful about his wisdom, Lord Shiva resigned to her fate and decided that it is indeed true that the Maya or delusion that are created in this world by Lord Hari (Vishnu; the Lord God) is very powerful. This is expressly stated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Sortha no. 51

Lord Ram’s Maya is so powerful that it had even compelled Sati, the divine consort of Shiva, to lie to her husband—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand—(i) Doha no. 41; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 59; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116.

Now, let us read this excellent verses of *Ram Charit Manas*—

(a) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72:—

jō māyā saba jagahi nacāvā. jāsu carita lakhi kāhumँ na pāvā. 1.

“The maverick Maya that makes the whole world dance to its tunes, and is so mysterious that no one is able to know its true character and nature (and therefore, by extension, how it will influence the creature and what negative consequences would follow in its wake)---(1)”

(b) Baal Kand, Sortha/Doha no. 51:—

sōrathā.

lāga na ura upadēsu jadapi kahē'u sivamँ bāra bahu.
bōlē bihasi mahēsu harimāyā balu jāni jiyamँ. 51.

Though Lord Shiva repeatedly told her the reality of Lord Ram, his wise words had no effect upon Sati whose heart did not accept the reasoning. She remained stubborn in her disbelief. [Sati wasn’t convinced about what her husband had said.]¹

Understanding in his heart about the stupendous power and the immense influence that Lord Hari’s (Lord Vishnu’s) Maya (delusion-creating powers) can have upon a person’s wisdom² (thereby totally eclipsing it, and hence making him or her susceptible to falling an easy prey to delusions and ignorance), Lord Mahesh (“the Great God”, Lord Shiva) smiled wryly and said³—(Sortha/Doha no. 51)

[Note—¹A similar situation has arisen elsewhere in the narration of Ram Charit Manas when we read that the great sage Narad, who is supposed to be a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and above passions and worldly emotions, too had not paid attention to Lord Shiva’s advice to him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 127.

The context in Narad's case was that once he had been so deeply submerged in mediating upon Lord Vishnu that Kamdeo (cupid), the god of passions, could not detract the sage inspite of his best efforts to do so. This achievement filled Narad with a sense of pride, and he went to Lord Shiva to boast of his achievement. It was then that the Lord told him that whatever he had said before him was alright, but he should not go and repeat his boast before Lord Vishnu as the latter is sure to punish him. Narad did not take this advice in the correct light, and thought that Shiva wishes to keep him quiet so that his stunning feat remains obscure so that the world would believe that Kamdeo was defeated by Shiva alone as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.

As in our present case of Sati suffering due to her disobeying Shiva, Narad too had to suffer horrible ignominy when Lord Vishnu turned him into an ugly faced monkey—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 133; and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 134.

²The power of Maya is extremely strong. It has held under its spell even the wisest and the most learned, and deluded them so much as to portray that they were utterly stupid and ignorant.

It is averred in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72 that Maya is so powerful that it makes the world dance to its tune—this is the proclamation of the saint-crow Kaagbhusund.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand—(i) Doha no. 41; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 59; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 116.

The Atharva Veda's *Pashupat Brahman Upanishad*, Uttar Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 9-10 describe the effects of Maya, verse nos. 15-18 the relationship between Maya and the Atma, and verse nos. 33, 44-45 the fact that Maya is a voluntary creation of the Atma as well as of Brahm.

Sage Veda Vyas' *Adhyatma Ramayan*, in its Lanka Kanda, canto 14, verse no. 28-29 describes the relationship between Maya and Brahm. These verses are quoted below in Chapter 5, sub-head 5.4.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 132 where we read that Lord Vishnu had smiled at the ignorance and delusions that engulfed the wise sage Narad as a result of the influence of Maya of the Lord.

Lord Ram's Maya is so great and powerful that it had provoked even Sati, the otherwise truthful consort of Shiva, to "tell a lie"—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56.]

(c) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 41:--

dōhā.

sunahu tāta māyā kṛta guna aru dōṣa anēka.
guna yaha ubhaya na dēkhi'ahim dēkhi'a sō abibēka. 41.

Oh dear, listen! Maya (delusions) has created numerous qualities, both the good and the bad.

It is better not to take any notice of them, for once one begins to see them he gets sucked in the vortex of confusions that will cause consternations and vexations for him, and this will be equivalent to his being overcome by 'A-vivek' or ignorance. (Doha no. 41)"

[Note—Since this creation is caused by Maya, it has its merits and demerits. This is the grosser and physical aspect of creation. But at a subtle level, the reality of existence is different; it is the ‘pure and sublime consciousness’ known as the Atma that forms the true essence of this living world. Whereas the external world has its merits and demerits, whereas its outwardly character has some things that are good and auspicious and others that are bad and inauspicious, its reality is uniformly auspicious and holy as it is ‘pure consciousness known as the Atma’. But the unfortunate part is that one is able to see the external world more easily than the subtle aspect of the same world because it is hidden from view. So, if a man relies upon the visible part of the world and attempts to derive at the truth, he will be left swinging between the right and the wrong, the merit and the demerit, the righteous and the unrighteous, the auspicious and the ignoble, and so on—which will leave him flummoxed and bewildered. This is his ‘A-vidya’—or lack of knowledge of the ‘truth’.

The Upanishads have unequivocally said that it is the same Brahm (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness) who has manifested in the form of the world. This means that all the countless units of this creation or world are reflections or images of the same entity known as Brahm. Then obviously there should be no dichotomy and opposite characters in this world. The aspect of the physical world that one sees with his gross organs of sight, i.e. the eye, presents a view that is contradictory to the assertion of the Upanishads that there is universality and uniformity in creation—because the world that the eyes see is the world created by ‘Maya’. Maya itself is a synonym for delusions, and hence there is no wonder in such a delusory sight of the world. Therefore, if one treats the world as the reality then he is overcome with Maya, and hence by ‘Avidya’ because delusions and ignorance go hand in hand. It leads to confusions and vexations, perplexing the spiritual aspirant and leaves him wondering what the truth is. This in turn robs him of this mental calmness and peace.]

(d) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 59:--

byākula gaya'u dēvariśi pāhīṁ. kahēsi jō sansaya nija mana māhīṁ. 3.
suni nāradahi lāgi ati dāyā. sunu khaga prabala rāma kai māyā. 4.

Being extremely upset and perplexed, Garud could not find peace. So, in order to calm himself and remove the cause of his perplexity, he went to seek advice from the celestial sage Narad and told him all about whatever was causing him confusion¹. (3)

When Narad heard what Garud said and found him indignant and agitated condition, he felt pity and sympathy for him. So he told Garud—‘Listen oh king of birds! Lord Ram’s Maya is very formidably powerful and forceful. (4)

[Note—¹What was causing Garud so much confusion and vexation? It was the sight of Lord Ram, whom Garud knew to be his almighty Lord Vishnu in a human form, getting ensnared by snakes and feeling helpless in the battle-field of Lanka. Garud naturally didn’t expect the all-powerful Lord to behave so helplessly like an ordinary human and allow himself to be humiliated by a demon, Meghnad or Indrajeet, the son of the demon king Ravana, who had managed to capture the Lord by his serpent-weapon. This has been narrated herein above from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Chaupai line no. 2 that follow this Doha.]

jō gyāninha kara cita apaharaī. bari'āīṁ bimōha mana karaī. 5.
jēhīṁ bahu bāra nacāvā mōhī. sō'i byāpī bihaṅgapati tōhī. 6.

It (the Maya) is so overriding and powerful that it steals (i.e. stupefies and dulls) the faculty of reasoning and thought even in those who claim to be wise, realised and

enlightened (“Gyani”). Not only that, this Maya forces ‘Moha’ (infatuation, attraction and attachment with the grosser aspects of this world)¹. (5)

It has made me dance to its tune on more than one occasions². Oh king of birds, it is the same Maya that has engulfed you and blinded your mind. [That is, you have become deluded, and that is why your mind is unable to think and rationalise anything.] (6)

[Note—¹The persons who are enlightened and self-realised are not expected to be attracted to the gross material world or seek pleasure and comfort from it, and neither are they expected to gratify the urges of the organs of their body. But Maya is so powerful a force in Nature that if it casts its shadow on such wise men, they fall from their exalted stature and begin to behave like utter ignorant people who are on a roller coaster ride of delusions and its associated problems in this world.

The power of Maya to delude even great sages and seers has been reiterated elsewhere also—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70.

²Narad had suffered the powerful blow of Maya. He had been overcome by passion and lust, getting so infatuated with a beautiful girl that he wanted to marry her. When Lord Vishnu saw his passionate condition and decided that it was not good for Narad, the Lord prevented him from marrying. This infuriated Narad and he cursed Lord Vishnu. Of course he lamented and regretted later on, but the damage had been done. This incident is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 138.]

(e) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71:—

siva caturānana jāhi ḥērāhīm. apara jīva kēhi lēkhē māhīm. 8.

When even the two powerful gods of the Trinity, i.e. Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma (who is also known as ‘Chaturan’ because he has four heads, enabling him to see in all the four directions of his creation simultaneously) are afraid of ‘Maya’ and its powerful negative influences¹, then say what do ordinary creatures of this world count? [That is, when Shiva and Brahma, who are two senior gods of this creation, fear to annoy Maya and are afraid that they would be affected by its negative and corrupting influences, then other creatures, including the other junior gods, have no chance of opposing the onslaught of Maya.]¹ (8)

[Note—¹Inspite of this fact that Maya is so powerful that it can instill fear in the mind of such powerful gods as Shiva and Brahma who themselves are wise and fully able to look after themselves, it (Maya) is like a timid maid in front of the Supreme Being represented by Lord Ram, who in turn is a human manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being known also as the Viraat Purush. Therefore, Maya cannot play tricks with its Lord, the Supreme Being. Rather, Maya has to dance to the tune set by Lord Ram. This is endorsed in Doha no. 71 (b) that follows below.

Further, ‘Maya’ (worldly delusions) is regarded as a dancer who is very cunning. She is herself afraid of ‘Bhakti’ (the auspicious virtue of devotion for Lord God) that is personified as another maid of the Lord, but his favourite. This being the case, the dancer maid (Maya) is afraid to offend the maid who is the Lord’s favourite (i.e. Bhakti). This simply means that a person who has Bhakti in him is free from the negative affects of Maya. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116.

Later on in this story we read that sage Kaagbhusund has himself asserted that ever since Lord Ram had blessed him and accepted him as one of his devotees, Maya

had stopped tormenting him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

(f) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116:—

māyā bhagati sunahu tumha dō'ū. nāri barga jāna'i saba kō'ū. 3.
puni raghubīrahi bhagati pi'ārī. māyā khalu nartakī bicārī. 4.

‘Maya’ (worldly delusions) and ‘Bhakti’ (devotion for Lord God) are both of the feminine gender¹. Everyone (i.e. every wise man) is aware of it. (3)

But there is a difference between the two. While Bhakti is very dear to Lord Raghbir (Ram) and the Lord is favourably inclined towards it (because it has auspicious virtues and endeavours to bring the creature nearer to the Lord instead of pushing him away from the him as done by Maya), the poor Maya on the other hand is like a cunning dancer (a courtesan, for example).² (4)

[Note—¹In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 71 (b) it is asserted that Maya is like a ‘maid’ servant of Lord Raghbir (Ram). And in Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow this Doha it is asserted that Maya that is so powerful that it makes the whole world dance to its tune is scared of annoying the Lord so much that all its moves are in accordance with the signals given by the movement of Lord Ram’s eyebrows. That is, Maya keeps alert and closely watches how Lord Ram reacts to her maverick tricks. If she gets even a slight hint that any of her moves are disliked by her Lord, she immediately mends her ways.

In the context of Bhakti it is clear that since Lord Ram prefers it over Maya, the latter dares not offend the former because that would indirectly offend her Lord, Sri Ram.

The net effect of this scenario is that if a person has the virtue of ‘Bhakti’ in him then he is assured of freedom from getting tormented by Maya and the rest of her associates which are listed below.

²While having the virtue of Bhakti enables a person to attain spiritual purity and bliss, Maya on the other hand engulfs him in a web of miseries and problems that are associated with this gross and perishable material world of sense objects. So therefore, Lord Ram prefers Bhakti as it helps its adherents to become pious and holy and acquire auspicious spiritual values. Maya pushes the creature into the vortex of worldly desires and injects in him many negative qualities. So Lord Ram dislikes it.

The negative qualities that are natural accompaniments of Maya have been listed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71. They are called the ‘family members’ of Maya because they all bear the characters of delusion and their resultant problems for the creature (refer: Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71).

These so-called associates or ‘family members’ of Maya are the following—Moha (attachment, infatuation), Kaam (lust, passion), Trishna (desires, yearning), Krodh (anger), Lobha (greed), Sri Mada (pride of self; pride of honour and achievements, of worldly prosperity and wealth), Gunas (the three inherent qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas that every living being possesses, and which mould his character and personality), Maana Mada (arrogance and haughtiness that comes with honour, success and respect), Joban Jwar (the recklessness and arrogance of youth), Mamta (affection and attachment to worldly things), Matsarya (envy, jealousy), Shoka (grief), Chinta (worry), Maya (delusions), Manorath (hopes, aspirations, vows, desires, determination to do this and achieve that), and the trio consisting of son/progeny-wealth/prosperity-fame/good name.

The independent and combined affect of all these entities on the creature has been explained alongside each verse in the text.]

bhagatihī sānukūlā raghurāyā. tātē tēhi ḍarapati ati māyā. 5.
rāma bhagati nirupama nirupādhī. basa'i jāsu ura sadā abādhī. 6.

Lord Ram is kind and favourably disposed towards ‘Bhakti’ (devotion). This is the reason why ‘Maya’ (delusion creating powers of the Lord) is scared of it (Bhakti)¹. [Here, Bhakti and Maya have been personified, and regarded as close associates of the Lord. ‘Bhakti’ is the favourite of Lord Ram, so the Lord’s maid known as ‘Maya’ is scared to offend the former. On the other hand, Maya does everything within its reach to please Bhakti in order to indirectly please her Lord, Sri Ram, and be in the Lord’s good books by being docile and obedient.] (5)

The spiritual virtue known as ‘Bhakti for Lord Ram’, or devotion for the Lord, is highly pure and immaculate; it is without any worldly taints or negativity; it is matchless in its purity and effectiveness. [Whereas, on the other hand, ‘Maya’ is a corrupt entity, and so it has no moral strength to face the pure entity known as ‘Bhakti’. While ‘Bhakti’ leads the creature towards the Lord, ‘Maya’ pulls him away from him. While ‘Bhakti’ helps the creature obtain liberation and deliverance as well as eternal peace and bliss, ‘Maya’ does the opposite: it forces the creature in the quicksand of worldly delusions and its attendant miseries and torments.]

So, ‘Maya’ is afraid to disturb anyone in whose heart the eclectic spiritual virtue of ‘Bhakti’ finds a permanent residence. Maya is hesitant to play its tricks upon a person in whose heart Bhakti resides. [Maya knows that if it plays smart with the Lord’s devotee who has Bhakti or devotion for Lord Ram in his heart, then it is sure to offend the Lord who shall punish her for her demeanours because, as has been said above, the Lord favours Bhakti for its immaculate and pious nature as well as its endeavour to provide spiritual peace and liberation to the soul of the living being—which Maya does not do.] (6)

[Note—It has been said in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 116 herein above that “Maya is like a dancer”. The dancer would adopt the posture that pleases her master, and would synchronise all her dance moves in accordance with the liking of the lord for whom she dances. So obviously, Maya would not invite the wrath of her Lord, Sri Ram, by offending the Lord’s favourite maid known as Bhakti.]

tēhi bilōki māyā sakucāī. kari na saka'i kachu nija prabhutāī. 7.
asa bicāri jē muni bigyānī. jācahīṁ bhagati sakala sukha khānī. 8.

Maya is hesitant and reluctant to offend Bhakti and those who have this virtue in themselves; it is unable to play its dirty tricks and impose its will on those persons who have Bhakti in their hearts. (7)

Taking this fact into consideration, wise sages who are learned and intelligent have deduced that ‘Bhakti’ is a mine of all happiness and peace. (8)

[Note—Kaagbhusund emphasises in this foregoing discourse that out of all the paths and ways that are open to a spiritual aspirant, the best and the easiest is that of ‘Bhakti’ or having devotion for Lord God and total submission to the Lord. This ensures that ‘Maya’ and its powerful companions (Moha, Kaam, Trishna, Krodh, Lobha, Mada, Maan, Mamta, Matsarya, Chinta, Shoka, Manorath etc. as listed in

Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71) do not torment the aspirant.

Besides these components of Maya, there are others, collectively herded in one group called ‘Avidya’ or ignorance. This Avidya is like a knot around the heart and the mind of the spiritual aspirant. Its characters, salient features and how it affects the creature has been discussed from Chaupai line no. 1 that follows Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 119 of this Kand.]

Section 2.5: The Maya Jaal—

The mysterious net of delusions that keeps the creature trapped in its snare is called Maya Jaal. The word ‘Maya’ briefly means delusions and ignorance, and ‘Jaal’ means a net, a web, a snare, a trap, a magical spell’.

The concept of Maya briefly refers to something that is based on delusions and deceit. The magical world created by a magician is a world of Maya. The trap that this charming deception creates for the creature making it believe that what it sees is for real is called the Maya Jaal or the net of delusions which entangle the creature like a bird getting caught in a bird catcher’s snare. When one sees a magic show he gets so engrossed in its illusions that for the time being the person forgets that what he thinks is so life-like and real has no substance and pith. He thinks that what he sees is real and true. The same basic concept is applied in metaphysics to explain the concept of delusions vis-à-vis this world. The deluded creature begins to get involved in this magical world, and does so many things as if walking in a dream. But a wise man realises that the truth is above this illusive world and does not allow himself to be misled by any cajoling by the magician; he simply laughs at it and waves away all attempts by the latter to entice him to participate in the show. He just watches the magic show dispassionately and does not get emotionally involved in it. Similarly, a wise man does not allow himself to be involved in this deluding world, and remains a dispassionate observer, not a participant in the activity of the world.

The *Tejobindu Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 5, verse no. 33 describes this Maya Jaal as follows—“The Atma has no ‘Maya’, or delusions, deceit and falsehoods in it, and neither is it affected by it at all. The Atma is not involved in any of the activities of this Maya, and therefore there is no fear in it due to any of the activities of Maya.

The Atma does not get involved in doing any deeds or taking any actions, and therefore it is not a ‘doer’ of any deed. It does not hear anything and therefore it does not have to ponder over or remember anything (33).”

Section 2.6: The 3 colours of Maya—

The *Mantriko-panishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes Maya in substantial detail. In its verse no. 5 it says that Maya has *three basic colours*—viz. ‘white’, ‘red’ or ‘dark’, and the various shades in between. These three colours represent the three basic qualities, called Gunas, present in all the creatures and are only symbolic of the innumerable variations in which the basic qualities can combine to produce countless number of characteristics and virtues and behaviours that give individuality and specific characteristics to millions and millions of creatures. These

are simply metaphors only meant to explain and help visualise certain things, and therefore should not be taken too literally as meaning that dark skinned people are sinful and pervert and worthy of condemnation, or that fair skinned ones are all righteous and noble, for just the opposite is witnessed daily in our lives.

Even as an offspring gets the colour of the skin of the race to which it belongs, the inherent characters of all creatures are inherited from their mother, and this mother is Maya. The white colour stands for the best category of qualities called Sata Guna, the red colour stands for the second and medium quality called Raja, and the dark colour stands for the meanest quality called Tama. The word Tam itself means 'dark' and it stands for the worst type of qualities leading to sinful and pervert nature in a man which makes his life hellish; the word 'red' is a metaphor for anger, vehemence, vengeance, agitations, restlessness, short temper, strife, hatred, envy, jealousy and the other such negative worldly characteristics in a person; the colour 'white' stands for peace, tranquility, prosperity, happiness and wisdom, all of which are the characters of noble and gentlemanly persons.

Here it should be noted that the three inherent qualities or Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama that characterize all the creatures of this creation are like the genes that the offspring carries of its parent. Through these Gunas, the Maya resides in the bosom of all the creatures as their defining 'nature' and basic 'temperament'—called the Prakriti of the creature. Even as the supreme Brahm as the Great Lord called Maheshwar used his mystical deluding maverick powers to create this illusion of the world at the cosmic level and made it so perfect that it appears to be perfectly true, the same Brahm while residing in the bosom of the individual creature as its Atma also creates this world by using its delusion creating powers, and uses its man-Friday, the mind, to ensure that it is implemented to perfection.

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“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

(As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’)

Chapter 3

The Affects of Maya

How Maya affects the Jiva, the living being, has been described in (i) *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 52-53, 69, 71, 74; (ii) *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Uttar Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 9-10, 15-18, 44-45; (iii) *Atma Upanishad*, verse nos. 26, 28-29; (iv) *Maitrayanyu Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 2; (v) *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 33.

(i) Now let us examine what the *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2 has to say on the subject of how Maya affects the Jiva (living being)—

“verse no. 52 = The existence of such delusory and fallacious perceptions as ‘duality’ (i.e. separate existence of the Jiva and Parmatma; the Ghatakash, the Mathakash and Mahakash as being separate from the Chidakash) are known to and recognised by only those exalted and wise ones who are experts in the Vedas and are well conversant with their divine knowledge.

They recognize the fact that everything that is done at the behest or instigation of Maya (delusions and artificial notion of truth) would automatically cease when the Maya itself is eliminated by acquisition of correct knowledge of the truth and reality. Then there would be no sense of duality, and consequentially there would be no such concept of a Jiva and Parmatma—i.e. there would be no sense of dual existence. [This is a very objective conclusion—it is a matter of common sense that ‘truth’ can be only one and not more than one. In the event that two things appear to be true and exist simultaneously than there must be something seriously wrong somewhere—for there cannot be two truths and therefore one is an imposter. This situation does not apply to ‘falsehood’, for this entity can have thousands of variations and all of them would be ‘truly false’! The philosophy of the Upanishads espouse and expound that the Atma and the Parmatma are the same albeit viewed at different levels of existence, the former at the level of the individual creature while the latter is viewed at the level of the creation at large. This Atma in all the living beings is the same like the water molecules in all water bodies known by whatever names is the same. This world is a visible manifestation of the cosmic Atma known as Brahm which is nothing but Consciousness personified.] (52).

[Note—The concept of Maya has been described in note to verse no. 69 of Canto 2 of this Upanishad below. Refer also to verse nos. 53, 56, 71.]

“verse no. 53 = When this enlightened state of existence is reached, one perceives only the eternal, truthful and non-dual ‘consciousness’ in its absolute and purest form. He is firmly established in this eternal truth and perceives his ‘self’ as this pure consciousness.

An enlightened and wise person develops the high level of thinking that makes him realise the truth of the fact that just like the sky or space cannot be fragmented into separate segments (such as Ghatakash, Mathakash, Mahakash etc.) because it is inherently immutable, indivisible, universal and uniform, so is the case with the pure consciousness revealed in the form of the ‘self’. This eclectic knowledge makes him identify himself with the vast world around him, and he expands his world view to include the entire creation, and stops having a limited and selfish view concerning only his body and its vested interests.

He realises that just like the sky is assigned artificial names (such as Ghatakash and Mathakash etc. as in verse no. 50), the two names given to the Atma or consciousness as Jiva and Parmatma, or as the inanimate and animate world, are also artificial and not reflective of the truthful nature of things¹. These two states of existence or being are attributed to the Atma because of the interference of Maya. The latter creates a smokescreen that hides the truth. As soon as this smokescreen of Maya is removed, the truth comes to the fore. This ‘truth’ is the pure and only one certainty known as ‘consciousness’ (53).

[Note—¹The Jiva is referred to as ‘inanimate’ because it has a gross body which is inanimate and inert. On the contrary, the Parmatma is referred to as ‘animate’ because it has the word Atma—or consciousness—in it. This leads us to a very interesting deduction—the Jiva is alive only because it has the consciousness—or Parmatma—residing inside its body. Shorn of the ‘animate’ Parmatma, the Jiva would be ‘inanimate’.]

“verse no. 69 = If one does not develop the high level of wisdom and erudition that is expected of him by studying the scriptures then he would still be deluded and think that the all-pervading and omnipresent Brahm can be attained by doing certain specific auspicious deeds for the purpose (such as doing penance, observing austerities and religious vows, giving alms and donations or holding religious ceremonies, going on pilgrims and observing sacraments etc.). [That is, this person who has not understood the fundamental principle behind the concept of Brahm—that this is a unique invisible entity which is eternal, ever-present and divine that is present even inside his own self as his Atma or pure conscious soul—would try to obtain access to it by adopting so many methods as described in the numerous scriptures. Such persons forget in the process that they need not do anything external to find the ultimate fount of bliss and the source of spiritual liberation, but to search for it inside their own bosom and realise the fact that the object of their search is residing very much in their own self as their Atma, their ‘pure conscious self’. The same Brahm also resides outside their body in the entire creation in a uniform and universal way, without exception. In other words, such ignorant persons are deluded enough to treat an entity known as Brahm that is inherently divine, sublime, subtle, eternal, imperishable, infinite, all-pervading, omnipresent and ubiquitous as being subjected to the limiting effects of things that exist in this mortal and perishable material world that is gross, inane and inert under the false impression that the world depicts the true form and nature of Brahm. They do not understand that what they see is the half truth and not the whole truth. They see only the exterior of the world and think that it is Brahm; they do not have the depth of wisdom and erudition or the aptitude to see

what lies behind the exterior. Hence they are deemed to be deluded and under the influence of Maya as described in verse nos. 52-53, 56 and 71 of this Canto 2 earlier.]

Proper study and understanding of the scriptures would help to overcome the lack of wisdom and erudition that has been carried down to this life from the past life as the man's fate, destiny or lot—called 'Praarabdha'. As result, when he develops proper level of erudition and wisdom he would be able to eliminate this illusionary and fallacious conception about Brahm, the body and the world that arises out of ignorance of the truth and reality.

In other words, he would be able to overcome Maya in all its three connotations¹ (69).

"verse no. 71 = When the 'Praarabdha' (i.e. one's destiny, fate and lot that he has inherited from his past and which has landed him in his present condition) is completely exhausted, the Jiva (living being) is able to shed his mortal coil (body) and free himself from its fetters.

All forms of Maya (worldly delusions and ignorance that had been shackling him for so long)—and even the knowledge that this Maya exists at all—arising out of the Praarabdha are also eliminated simultaneously¹.

It is only as long as this Maya exists that one perceives this deluding and artificial world of material sense objects. As soon as Maya is eliminated, the artificial world is eliminated as well. What remains is something that is not illusionary or deluding—i.e. Brahm, the ultimate Truth, the unequivocal Absolute and the undisputed Reality of creation (71).

[Note—¹The creature takes a new birth because his deeds of the past life have left a burden of unspent and accumulated effects that are yet to be suffered or enjoyed by him. Besides this, the unfulfilled desires and passions force him to take a new birth in the hope of completing his unfinished task in the new life. Then, during his new life, the Jiva indulges in fresher deeds and accumulates, even without his knowing, newer bagful of effects. The past dogs him to the present and tampers with his natural temperaments and thought processes; his mind and intellect become biased and prejudiced. It is like the case of a man who is already biased and mentally prejudiced sitting upon the judge's seat to decide a case—his judgment would naturally be partisan, biased, lop-sided, distorted and not objective. The prejudiced intellect and mind of the man, under the influence of his past—his Praarabdha—would not be able to act independently, and this would in turn distort his way of thinking, his present way of life and dealing with its complexities. He would not be able to 'think straight and analytically' because the mind and intellect are tainted and handicapped by pre-conceived ideas and convictions that have been firmly ingrained in them as a baggage brought forward from the past.

It is here that company of wise men and study of the scriptures come in handy. A man who is fortunate enough to have this privilege is able to know the reality, he would be able to see his own faults and shortcomings himself in the mirror of the teaching of the scriptures, and if he is indeed wise and sane he would realise his past follies and taking cue from the maxim that 'it is never too late to make a start' he would now strive hard to at least mend his future if he can't do anything about the past. So, he would try to dispassionately consume his past baggage of effects of deeds that he had inadvertently and in his utter ignorance allowed himself to be burdened with, a burden that has hitherto hindered his spiritual progress, and sincerely strive not to accumulate any new one further from now on. This is easily achieved by him by remaining mentally and emotionally detached from the deeds in the current life and understanding that the doer of deeds is the gross body which is not his 'self'. His 'self' is the Atma which is expected to neutrally observe all that the body does in a complete dispassionate and detached manner. So there is no question of the Atma

being accused of doing any fresh or newer deed—for the doer is the body and not the Atma.

The Atma lets the gross body enjoy or suffer from the consequences of the deeds done by the latter while maintaining a safe distance from them. When the body dies, it is either cremated or buried, and with the body is burnt or buried all the deeds that were done by it. Since the body is out of the picture, since it is cremated or buried and gone, there is no question of the consequences of the deeds done by it remaining after its elimination. The indicted body is dead and gone, and the Atma, the 'true self' of the enlightened man which had remained aloof so far from this quagmire of deed and their consequences, is therefore absolved of all the misdoings and the mischief created by the body.

Since Maya is a metaphor for delusions created by a prejudiced and tainted mind-intellect, when true wisdom dawns upon the man it is natural that he would not be misled by Maya. Thus Maya is also dispensed with along with the Praarabdha.]

"verse no. 74 = When the moon is said to be devoured by the demon Rahu (the severed head of a demon) during the lunar eclipse, people start offering worship, making sacrifices, doing penances, taking purifying baths, giving alms and making charities, observing austerities etc. so that the Moon God is freed from the demon's curse, but all their deeds are a waste of effort and done in utter ignorance because there is no such event and the darkness on the moon's disc is actually a shadow of the earth falling upon it. This shadow would go away on its own when the time comes even if no such hue and cry is raised by worried worshippers. So it is a height of stupidity and profound ignorance to even think that the Moon God has been cursed or is being devoured, and by doing so many religious deeds it can be freed from its torments.

Likewise an ignorant man held in shackles by Maya does numerous auspicious rites and rituals and other religious deeds such as doing various sacrifices, sacraments, pilgrimages, purifying rites, offering of oblations and libations to Gods and Spirits etc. in the hope of getting liberation and deliverance from the fetters of Maya. All such activities are futile because the Jiva, the 'true self' or the consciousness that is the true identity of the living being, is never held in shackles or fettered by anything in the first place. Therefore there is no question of the Jiva seeking or getting freedom from any kind of non-existent shackles or fetters; it is all imaginary and fictitious (74)."

(ii) The Atharva Veda's *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Uttar Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 9-10 describe the effects of Maya, verse nos. 15-18 the relationship between Maya and the Atma, and verse nos. 44-45 the fact that Maya is a voluntary creation of the Atma as well as of Brahm. Now let us examine these verses and learn more about Maya—

"Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse nos. 9-10 = It is on the inspiration and command of the Lord that the eyes see things having forms and colours; it is on his orders and empowerment that the ears hear sounds. Similarly, all other sense organs work expressly on his command and are regulated by him. They are inclined to remain engrossed in their respective objects in the external world because the Lord has created them so that the Atma can perceive the beauty, the majestic charm and the magnificence of the creation crafted by the Lord through their medium.

[Since the Atma is a microcosmic personification of Brahm that lives in the gross body of the creature, it follows that it is actually Brahm himself who enjoys the sights of the world created by no one else but him. The Lord plays with his own

creation through the medium of the Atma and the gross body of the creature in which this Atma lives!

The different sense organs of perception (such as the eye which sees, the nose that smells, the ears that hear, the tongue that tastes, and the skin that feels and touches), as well as the organs of action (such as the hands that do deeds and receive anything, the legs that take Brahm albeit in the form of the resident Atma to its designated place, the mouth that helps Brahm to speak and eat, the excretory organs that helps Brahm to get rid of waste from its immediate vicinity inside the body, and the genitals that helps Brahm to reproduce the world and help it sustain its own self perpetually) are the instruments employed by Brahm to interact with and sustain the world of his own creation.

But it has been asserted in the Upanishads that the Atma is inherently neutral and dispassionate. So how and why does it get involved in the gross body through the medium of the above organs? The answer is that it is influenced by 'Maya'—the power of delusions. That is, the Jiva (living being) who is deluded and overcome by Maya is the one who gets involved or indulgent in the world, and the Jiva who is wise and enlightened is freed from this fetter. It is Maya that shrouds the Jiva's intellect and mind and makes him behave as if he is ignorant of the Truth though his 'truthful self' happens to the wise and enlightened Atma. This is the great paradox of creation.]

This inclination of the sense organs to be attracted towards their respective objects is due to Maya—i.e. by the dynamic power of Brahm which makes falsehoods appear to be real, thereby making the sense organs think that the objects of the world which they pursue are true and real, and that they would derive true pleasure and joy by being associated with them or being in their company. The sense organs are the instruments that the Atma, as a representative of Brahm residing inside the creature's body, uses to 'see', to interact and to sustain the gross world of material sense objects.

The desire of the creature to swerve towards the sense objects of the world is due to this affect of Maya, and it is not the creature's inherent and natural inclination. [This is because the true self of the creature is the Atma which is inherently dispassionate and wise. It has no desire for material comforts and pleasures derived from the sense objects of the mortal world. But when Maya intervenes as the spoilsport, the Atma gets deluded, and thereby it loses its pristine purity and becomes tainted.] (9-10).

"Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse nos. 15-16 = A wise person who has realised that the Maheswar (Brahm) is an entity that is beyond the grasp of any of the sense perceptions of the gross body as well as the various faculties of the subtle mind-intellect complex, should discard taking recourse to rationality, logics and proofs to realise Brahm. Instead, he should concentrate on realizing Brahm by the medium of his inner-self—i.e. by contemplation and meditation, by turning inwards and focusing his attention on the pure consciousness that is self-illuminated and which resides in his bosom, rather than searching for Brahm in the external world. It is only then that he can attain true knowledge of Brahm, or become truly 'Brahm-realised, wise and enlightened'.

It is the Atma that is self-illuminated, while the external world of Maya (or the world generated by delusions of the mind) is enveloped in darkness. Whereas the Atma is an embodiment of light and enlightenment, Maya on the other hand stands for darkness, delusions and ignorance.

[In other words, when a spiritual aspirant turns inwards in search of the 'Great Truth', he discovers an entity that is self-illuminated, radiant and glorious as the

celestial Sun. This is the Atma. Like the Sun that can be said to the virtual Lord of the solar system, this Atma is also the Lord of the microcosm known as the Jiva, the living being. Microcosm exists because there is a ‘macrocosm’; one logically proves the existence of the other. For instance, if there is a day then there must be a night, and vice-versa. So, if the Atma is a Lord of the Jiva, its macrocosmic counterpart would naturally be the Lord of the whole existence at the cosmic plane. The latter aspect of the omnipresent, ubiquitous, all-pervading, immutable and immanent Atma is therefore called ‘Maheshwar’, the supreme Lord the seeker was searching for when he had set out to find the truthful Lord of creation who is the ultimate and the supreme Authority. This Lord is known as Brahm, the Supreme Being.

Since the Atma is a representative of this Supreme Being residing in the inner-being of all the creatures, it follows that it is also Maheshwar. It is like the case of the same sky being assigned two different names of Ghata-Kash and Maha-kash by the virtue of the sky’s (‘Akash’) location inside the body of a hollow pitcher (‘Ghat’) and outside it respectively.

The Atma is like the flame of a lantern or a candle. This flame itself is self-illuminated, splendidorous and a brilliant source of light; this flame illuminates the surrounding world by its light. Sans this flame, the surrounding area would be in pitch darkness. Similarly, the world would be enveloped in a thick veil of darkness if the Atma—the living factor of life known as the ‘consciousness’—were not present in it. To draw a parallel from the physical world, the latter would be a sea of darkness if there was no Sun to light it up.

From the metaphysical point of view, the outside world is dark because it is the creation of Maya—the power of this Maheshwar to willfully create a veil of delusions around himself. Why would the Maheshwar do so is answered in verse no. 1 of Kanda/Canto 1.

By corollary, Maya can be removed by its own creator. The clue to the creation of Maya is with the Maheshwar (Atma at the micro level, and Brahm at the macro level of creation), and therefore it is the Maheshwar himself who can dismantle it. This simply means that Maya can be overcome by the Atma itself should it decide to do so, and hence it also follows that the Jiva, the living being, is himself to blame for the shroud of delusions that he has weaved around himself because this Jiva’s truthful ‘self’ is the Atma.

The colourful world of fascinating charm and variety that is observed is actually a tapestry of delusions that the Maheshwar has created himself.] (15-16).

[Note—Earlier it has been said in Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 6, as well as in Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 21, 24, 28 etc. that the Atma, known as the Hans, is like the Sun and the Pranav. The ‘Sun’ is the only self-illuminated body in the whole of the solar system. Space voyages in modern times has established beyond doubt that the outer space is completely dark. The sky that we see as lighted from earth during the daytime is actually due to refraction of sunlight from the uncountable impurities present in the atmosphere of the earth. But just outside the upper surface of the earth’s atmosphere, in the bottom-less vacuum of the outer space, the sky is absolute dark even though the same Sun is shining at the same place as before.

The other word ‘Pranav’ refers to the background sound in the cosmic space. Science has shown that there are a number of factors for this cosmic humming, such as the magnetic field around the revolving planets, ionized solar wind blowing in outer space, and other physical factors. It has been observed that a grave humming sound is heard just outside the earth’s outer atmosphere which makes it appear that the earth is groaning as it slowly revolves around its axis. We do not hear this sound on earth because of the surrounding pollution created by terrestrial noise, but since

there is absolute quiet in outer space this subtle sound becomes stark against the all-pervading calmness.

Now we come to ‘Brahm’. The term Brahm applies to ‘everything’, without exception, that exists in this creation, and obviously therefore both the noise and the quietude come within the ambit of ‘Brahm’ as do the Sun and the Pranav! In other words, the Sun and the Pranav are one or the other aspects or facets of the ubiquitous Brahm. This is the picture at the cosmic plane of existence.

The void of the space has no life par-se, so the mysterious entity, which we like to call the inexplicable forces of Nature, that keeps the hanging celestial bodies in their fixed place in the universe, that keeps the Sun burning eternally without any replenishment in its stock of fuel, which creates sound from nowhere, which created the elements from nothing—is known as Brahm. Since something that has no life, vitality and dynamism in it cannot produce any other thing—dead entities don’t create—it follows that this Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness that is regarded as the seed of life and creation. This is the rough picture at the cosmic level of creation.

At the microcosmic plane, this Brahm is revealed as the ‘consciousness’, the essential life-infusing spark, that resides inside the gross body of the creature who represents the creation in a miniature form. This ‘consciousness’ is called the Atma as it is the most fundamental and basic entity without which the creature’s very existence as a ‘living being’ known as the Jiva would be questioned and jeopardized. The word ‘Atma’ means ‘the soul, the essence, the basis, the fundamental, the principal and the elementary form’ of anything.

Since the Atma not only lights up the inner being of the body with the light of life and consciousness but is also self-sustaining and self-illuminated, it is likened to the celestial Sun. Again, since the dead and the inane entity known as the body gets its power to live by the beating of the heart, the beating which creates a subtle thumping sound as well as a silent humming or whispering as the blood flows through the blood-vessels inside the body, the Atma is also likened to the Pranav, the cosmic background sound.

Elsewhere it is said in the Upanishads that the Sun is a visible manifestation of Brahm because the latter represents the brilliance and magnificence of the glories of Brahm. In this context, refer to the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 4. The Surya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 3 asserts that all forms of life on earth depend upon the Sun God. The Narayan Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in Brahma-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

Brahm in metaphysical context refers to the pure consciousness that has two levels of existence—one is the macro level, and the other is the micro level. At the macro level this refers to the cosmic Consciousness that is universal and uniform throughout this creation, and this fact that the cosmic Consciousness is the Supreme Being himself personified is endorsed in the Atharva Veda’s Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 56. At the micro level of creation, the term ‘consciousness’ refers to the individual’s Atma, his soul. This Atma is his truthful ‘self’.

In the context of the present verse of our Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, it is stunning to note that the Sun that is so blazingly splendorous lives in a space of the

outer sky filled with overwhelming darkness. This is how the idea of the ‘Maheshwar being surrounded by darkness of Maya’ originated!

It ought to be noted here that inspite of this all-engulfing darkness in outer space, the Sun continues to shine brilliantly, and any object that is turned towards the Sun too gets illuminated. In other words, inspite of the world being submerged in the delusions created by Maya, those who turn towards the ‘truthful Brahm’ get enlightenment and wisdom inspite of all odds stacked against them. But if they turn their back towards Brahm, they would see only miseries and insurmountable problems of life instead of hope and salvation!]

“Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse nos. 17-18 = There is never a similarity between the self-evident and cognizable Atma, and the illusionary and deluding Maya.

It is well known and established by doing self research, applying of logic, contemplating and pondering deeply, separating fact from fiction, intelligent analysis and wise derivation of the truth that the supreme Atma, which is consciousness and self-illuminated, has nothing to do with Maya at all.

The debates about the truthfulness or otherwise of anything in this gross material world of sense objects that are marked by delusions are limited to the world. Such debates are the subject matters revolving around Vidya (knowledge, skill and expertise in any given subject) or A-vidya (the opposite of Vidya). It has no bearing on the Atma which is beyond the purview and jurisdiction of either the Vidya or the A-vidya for the simple reason that the Atma is an ethereal entity that transcends the defining boundaries of the gross world (17-18).

[Note—The Jiva, i.e. the living being, is either aware of things in this world or is unaware of them. The state of existence when the Jiva is aware of this world and its objects is known as ‘Vidya’ or knowledge and awareness, while the opposite would naturally be ‘A-Vidya’ or lack of knowledge and awareness. In the field of spiritualism, knowledge of the truth of the Atma is known as ‘Vidya’, and its lack is ‘A-Vidya’.

Now, since the Atma is said to be eternally self-illuminated and enlightened, to cast doubts on its inherent divinity and greatness as well as its existence comes under the definition of ‘A-Vidya’, while to be sure and convinced of the same is categorized as ‘Vidya’.]

“Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse no. 44 = Any Authority is established by its inherent and intrinsic dynamic powers, strength and potentials. When things are subjected to certain laws and regulations it is a sign that there is some Authority to control and regulate them. In other words, since the creation has an in-built regulatory mechanism that controls each and every phase of existence, it is too obvious to doubt that there is an invisible Authority that gives effect to this control and regulation mechanism. This ‘Authority’ is Brahm. Brahm and Authority are not separable from one another; they are synonymous with each other (just like a king and his royal authority are inseparable from one another and synonymous with each other).

Brahm is the ‘Supreme Authority’ in creation inasmuch there is no Authority beyond Brahm. Brahm is the only Authoritative Being in creation. Brahm is the Authority that has the power and the authority which are inviolable and sacrosanct. The fact is that there is no ‘Authority’ other than Brahm in this creation—and that makes Brahm ‘supreme’.

It is also a fact that Maya (delusions) has no real existence. [Maya is an instrument in the hands of Brahm to exercise his authority over creation. It is Maya that helps Brahm to keep the wheel of creation rotating endlessly by keeping the creatures deluded and trapped. When the time comes for winding up the creation,

Brahm exercises his ‘authority’ and removes the smokescreen of Maya. This smokescreen can also be voluntarily removed by Brahm-realised persons because they are themselves Brahm personified!] (44).

“Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse no. 45 = Wise ascetics realise that Maya is a voluntary creation of the Atma that resides in their inner-self.

[In other words, they realise that no one else is to blame for the web of delusions that they have created around themselves voluntarily. This is because their Atma is their truthful ‘self’, and it is this Atma that has created the Maya.]

However, this Maya and its negative and deluding effects are blocked by the knowledge of Brahm. It then appears only as a neutral entity that is as ineffective as an image or reflection seen in a mirror.

[In other words, those ascetics who are Brahm-realised are not affected by the negative influences of Maya. The latter seems to exist in this world because for the simple reason that the world exists, as without the Maya this world cannot exist. Maya and the artificial world go hand-in-hand; they co-exist. In other word, both the Maya and the world are imaginations of the mind; if the mind so decides, both would vanish. Maya has any relevance only till the time a man acknowledges the presence of the gross world—because the latter is a product of the former. But once he becomes enlightened enough to understand that the world is imaginary and therefore non-truth, it is a natural corollary that the relevance of the Maya is done away with. Instead of delusions, he begins to see the ‘truth’ everywhere. And this ‘truth’ is Brahm. Therefore, for a Brahm-realised person Maya ceases to exist, and with its cessation the world also ceases to exist.

This is all there is to Maya’s importance and influence; it does not go any further than this point. It does not affect the inner-self of the wise ascetic who is freed from its cunning tricks, who understands that if he so determines he can easily overcome both the delusions and artificiality created by his imaginative mind.

This is why Brahm-realised and self-realised ascetics become enlightened and empowered enough that they can see the secret ‘truth’ in the same world in which other ordinary men cannot!

The reflection of any object that is seen in a mirror appears to be as true and real as the object itself, leading to so perfect a delusion that a man who does not know the real situation would begin to believe, after sometime, that the reflection or the image seen in the mirror is the object itself. This man forgets that what he sees is simply a ‘reflection or an image’ for the simple reason that the medium of seeing the object under question is a ‘mirror’ that has the grand virtue of creating a perfect image of the real thing.

When a wise man sees an image of an object in a mirror he immediately knows that there surely must be the object somewhere in the vicinity. So he looks around to find it, and then he is able to have a sight of the real thing. Say, is it not foolish to run behind the water seen in a mirage during a hot summer afternoon in desert even if one comes across a real source of water close at hand?

Therefore, is it not foolish to run behind the mirage-like world seeking peace and happiness when one knows that it is imaginary and misleading, as well as transient and perishable, instead of attempting to realise the ‘spiritual truth’ that would bestow him with peace and happiness that are not only everlasting but have depth and profundity as well.

The ‘image or the reflection’ seen in a mirror is never the real thing though it appears to be so. Similarly, when the supreme Truth (the cosmic Consciousness

revealed in the form of 'life' in this creation) is seen against the background of Maya, it appears in the form of the visible gross world. When the same Truth is seen with the eyes of wisdom and enlightenment, it appears in the form of Brahm. Again, while the term 'Brahm' refers to the Truth at the macro level of creation, the same Truth is referred to as the 'Atma' when considered at the micro level of existence.

Hence, to conclude, a Brahm realised man sees this world as a reflection or an image of Brahm. It is in the mirror of existence that he sees Brahm being reflected. Therefore, even if the world is removed Brahm would still be there—just like the case of an object remaining in place even if the mirror that reflects its image is removed from sight.] (45)."

(iii) The *Atma Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse nos. 26, 28-29 are very explicit in the principle that all the spiritual problems that are created for a Jiva, the living being, are the cause of Maya, and that by eliminating Maya he can easily overcome them.

To quote—

"verse no. 26 = How is it possible that an enlightened and a highly realised ascetic who has virtually become Brahm personified after having attained high degree of self-realisation and its attendant enlightenment ever take a birth again because creation and its expansion are the effects created by Maya (the powers of Brahm to create delusions) which this ascetic has already conquered and eliminated from its roots.

All fetters and bondages having their genesis in Maya, and all obstacles that this Maya creates in the path of one's Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance) would no longer apply to an ascetic who has eliminated Maya as a stepping-stone to Brahm-hood.

[The very fact that he is 'wise and enlightened', the fact that he has developed a high degree of renunciation and detachment from the world as well as the body and their respective allurements and temptations is due to his having vanquished Maya. Elimination of Maya is a pre-requisite for being Brahm-realised in the first place. Hence, when Maya is trounced, there is no question of this creation ever raising its evil hood again. All the problems are created when one is not aware of the truth and is instead enveloped in a shroud of ignorance and delusions. For instance, a man becomes terrified when he sees a length of harmless rope when he thinks, out of ignorance of the truth and its attendant delusions, that it is venomous snake. He is also horrified to see a lifeless cuticle of a snake if he does not know that this cuticle has no life in it and is simply a dead piece of discarded skin. But once he becomes aware of the truth, he loses all fears of these two things.

All spiritual problems are created by Maya; the Jiva (the living being) is subjected to all spiritual torments and mental dilemmas because he is embraced by Maya. When he breaks free from its clutches he is like a slave finding his final freedom from eternal slavery. Under the overpowering influence of Maya, he had erroneously treated his gross body as his 'self', and had treated the world as real and truthful. When this Maya is eliminated, then obviously this erroneous notion is dispelled and the light of true knowledge shines through much like the brilliant rays of the sunlight breaking through the shroud of thick cloud to illuminate the world, which in this case is his inner self. Say, how can the darkness of ignorance and its accompanying phantoms and ghosts live when the bright sun shines? He realises that his 'self' is not the body but the pure conscious Atma, and that this Atma is an eternal, sublime, ethereal and a holy Spirit as compared to the gross body which has characters that are the opposite of those possessed by the Atma. For instance, the body

dies and perishes while the Atma is an eternal and imperishable entity. He understands that birth and death are limited to the gross body and have no relevance vis-à-vis the Atma.

He also realises that this Atma is a microcosmic image of the macrocosmic Atma of the entire creation, and that the latter is known as Brahm. That is why when a self-realised ascetic proclaims 'I am Brahm' he is speaking an absolute truth without any pretensions and deceit.

The Atma in its cosmic form is known as the 'Parmatma', the supreme Atma. Neither the Atma nor the Parmatma ever takes a birth or dies.] (26).

"verse nos. 28-29 = Brahm has no pretensions and coverings; it has no deceit, conceit and falsehoods associated with it. Therefore, it is the unadulterated and naked 'truth' that has no distortions whatsoever.

Whether or not one believes in the existence of anything is actually the function of the intellect and the mind. It is the mind-intellect that decides for a creature whether anything exists or does not exist in this world.

This intellect-mind complex is a subtle part or component of the gross body which is like a covering of the Atma, the pure consciousness, representing Brahm. The fact of the matter is that Brahm has no such thing as a mind-intellect complex for the simple reason that Brahm has no gross body with its various components, including the subtle component known as the mind-intellect.

Therefore, Brahm, the pure cosmic Consciousness, is never deluded, is never confused and is never in any doubt about the 'truth' of anything, including this world. One of the obvious reasons for this is that Brahm is the one who has created this world by employing his own dynamic powers of creating Maya and has employed his own Shakti (powers, authority and energy) to give it its shape. Therefore Brahm clearly knows the secret of this world; he is aware how it has come into being; he is privy to its hidden mysteries.

Because of the fact that the Atma (the pure self) of a living being is none else but this Brahm in a personified form, it follows that a wise and self-realised person knows that this world is false and imaginary; that it is a creation of Maya and its stupendous maverism known as Maya Shakti. He allows his 'self' to interact with this world only to the extent that is absolutely necessary for him because he has to live in it till the time the Atma has completed its journey and reached its destination. This 'destination' is final spiritual liberation and deliverance, final emancipation and salvation—which are collectively called 'Mukti'.

By corollary, once the world becomes irrelevant for a self-realised and enlightened man, his body too becomes equally irrelevant. This is because both the body and the world are gross and a part of the creation of Maya which has trapped his soul in its vice-like grip.

Since all delusory notions arising out of Maya that make the existence of the world possible (like the case of a snake existing in the rope) are functions of the mind-intellect, it follows that the Atma has no such conceptions arising in it because it is free from Maya and its effects, as the Atma is naturally and intrinsically highly enlightened, self-illuminated, knowledgeable and wise.

In other words, only when the Atma is under the influence of Maya does it regard the world as true, meaningful and relevant. Once the veil of Maya and its grip is removed, the Atma is able to perceive the truth of the world—and this 'truth' is that the world is imaginary and entrapping; it is the result of the imagination of the fertile mind, the mind that makes a man think that the rope is a snake!

When the stupidity and ignorance of the mind and intellect are done away with, both the fallacious conception of the rope being a snake, and the inherently false world to be true are done away with. Thereafter only the truth prevails, and this ‘truth’ is the spirituality of the ‘self’ which is nothing but the pure consciousness known as the Atma.

So we conclude that when Maya is removed, the Brahm (in its personified form as the Atma of the living being) is convinced that the world is false and gross by nature (28-29)."

(iv) The *Maitrayanyu Upanishad*, canto 4, verse no. 2 of the Sam Veda tradition—

“Like the spell cast on his spectators by the magician (known as the “Indra-Jaal”), the ‘Bhoot Atma’ (i.e. the living beings Atma) is surrounded by ‘Maya’ (delusions, ignorance and illusions pertaining to this world). It acts as if in a dream. Like the core of the plantain stem (which has no pith), it lacks substance and a solid core or essence. Like a street-charmer or a maverick dancer (known as a “Nat”, pronounced as nut), it dresses itself in new attires every now and then to enchant and please its spectators.

[Here, new attires refer to it constantly changing its identity, characteristic, manners, demeanours etc. in order to keep the world and its inhabitant enthralled by its stupendous and magnificent majesty, pomp, prosperous external looks etc.. The creature changes its colours like a chameleon in order to appease the world.]

Like a wall decorated with pictures and paintings, its external features are very charming and alluring. Besides this, it is also said that the various objects of perception such as sound (word) and touch (feeling) etc. are also without any real essence and substance, i.e., they are worthless and hollow. The ‘Bhoot Atma’ that is engrossed and entangled in such hollow pursuits of following things which have no material content worth the name, as it were, becomes so benumbed by constantly remaining in a void that it cannot remember even its self (i.e. it forgets who it ‘really’ is, what is its ‘true identity, what is the ‘real’ destination it ought to be heading to, and that the objects it so blindly follows are nothing else but a ‘big black hole’) (2).”

(v) How Maya creates a separation between Brahm (the Supreme Being) and Jiva (creature; living being) has been outlined in the *Annapurna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 33 as follows—“The Lord of creation known as Maheshwar, i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm, is merely a neutral witness to everything without getting involved in any of the things and deeds in this world, without either enjoying anything or suffering from anything.

This Maheshwar is self-illuminated. Any sense of duality or difference or dichotomy that exists between this Lord and the Jiva (the creature) is imaginary and only out of the interfering Maya (delusions about the reality and truth).

When the Maya corrupts the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious; the faculty of reasoning and thoughts), the creature begins to think that such difference does exist, while when this Chitta is freed from the corrupting influences of Maya, these imaginary views vanish (33).”

“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

(As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’)

Chapter 4

How Maya Created the World

This eternal question has been answered in the Upanishads and in Ram Charit Manas. Now, let us examine what they say and how they describe the way Maya created this world.

The *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. 16 cites a very fine illustration to explain how ‘Maha Maya’ or the Great Delusion affects Brahm. To quote—“Even as the colourless crystal appears to be tinged red when it is near a red-coloured flower of China rose (clom eviseora), and regains its original pristine colour when the flower is removed, the pristine and immaculate prime nature of Brahm appears to be tainted and influenced when there are Maya and Avidya near this Divinity. When this happens, Brahm appears to exhibit various attributes and qualifications; it appears as having a dual form or existence, and other such delusory effects that are natural affects of Maya and Avidya.

[In other words, the non-dual and universal Brahm representing Consciousness begins to imagine that there is duality or so many things other than the ‘One and the Only’. This gives rise to the notion of existence of countless varieties of the same Consciousness, and this erroneous belief is the cause of this manifested creation. So it is clear that this creation is a misnomer for Brahm, the supreme Consciousness. And this is also the reason why it is said that the world is a manifestation of Brahm. Actually it is indeed the non-dual Brahm, but there is a rider—and it is that this Brahm has surrounded its self with Maya or delusions, which in turn gives the impression of variety and duality.

Again, this is also the reason why Maya is closely associated with ‘Avidya’ or lack of knowledge of the truth.]”

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 33, 44-45 describe how Maya creates this world.

“Verse no. 33 = Only those whose inner-self has been thoroughly cleansed of all sorts of faults and shortcomings (associated with life in this corrupt mundane world embedded with delusions and ignorance), and is thereby rendered holy, untainted and pure, are eligible to receive or accept or see or witness and experience the supreme transcendental Divinity (Brahm) which is self-illuminated.

Those who are covered in a veil of Maya (delusions) cannot ever expect to have a divine sight or view of the supreme Lord (33).

“Verse no. 44 = Any Authority is established by its inherent dynamic powers and potentials. When things are subjected to certain laws and regulations it is a sign that there is some Authority to control and regulate them. In other words, since the creation has an in-built regulatory mechanism that controls each and every phase of existence, it is too obvious to doubt that there is an invisible Authority that gives effect to this control and regulation mechanism. This ‘Authority’ is Brahm. Brahm and Authority are not separable from one another, they are synonymous with each other (just like a king and his authority are inseparable from one another and synonymous with each other).

The fact is that there is no ‘Authority’ other than Brahm in this creation. It is also a fact that Maya (delusions) has no real existence. [Maya is an instrument in the hands of Brahm to exercise his authority over creation. It is Maya that helps Brahm to keep the wheel of creation rotating endlessly by keeping the creatures deluded and trapped. When the time comes for winding up the creation, Brahm exercises his ‘authority’ and removes the smokescreen of Maya. This smokescreen can also be voluntarily removed by Brahm-realised persons because they are themselves Brahm personified!] (44).

“Verse no. 45 = Wise ascetics realise that Maya is a creation of the Atma that resides in their inner-self.

[In other words, they realise that no one else is to blame for the web of delusions that they have created around themselves voluntarily. This is because their Atma is their truthful ‘self’, and it is this Atma that has created the Maya.]

However, this Maya and its effects are blocked by the knowledge of Brahm. It then appears only as a neutral entity that is as ineffective as an image or reflection seen in a mirror.

[In other words, those ascetics who are Brahm-realised are not affected by Maya. The latter does exist in this world because for the simple reason that the world exists, as without the Maya this world cannot exist. But that is all there is to Maya’s importance and influence; it does not go any further than this point. It does not affect the inner-self of the wise ascetic who is freed from its cunning tricks. This is why Brahm-realised ascetics can see the ‘truth’ in the same world which other ordinary men cannot!] (45).”

The *Paingalo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 12 has also described how the world was created by Maya by the Ishwar or Brahm, the supreme Lord of creation. In the course of this discourse, this Upanishad also elucidates the affect of Maya on this creation. To quote this verse—

“That all-knowing and omniscient Ishwar (the supreme Lord of creation) invoked his own stupendous powers that created illusions and delusions in this creation, called his ‘Maya’, which allowed him to assume any form that he wished, and in conjunction with it (or joining hands with his own Maya, or allowing himself to become veiled in his own delusions) he entered the body of the individual creature. He was so enamoured with his own creation, and especially when he allowed his Maya to accompany him, that the same cosmic Lord who is beyond comprehension of even the wisest of men and the reach of the holy scriptures, such as the Vedas and the Purans, became engulfed or surrounded by ‘Moha’ (worldly attractions, infatuations, attachments, endearments, longings, love and affections). With this twin fault—viz.

Maya and Moha—that supreme Lord who has no attributes and names became a ‘worldly creature’. [That is, when Maya found out that it’s Lord is getting interested in and developing affection for what he has created, it went ahead to fulfill the wishes of its Lord like a faithful and obedient servant would. Maya went literally overboard to please the Lord, and knowing that he might balk and suffer indecision (because Brahm was an enlightened Being, and he would soon realise his failings), Maya showed its sly hand and made him get infatuated and enamoured with that creation to such an extent that the Lord lost awareness of who is was, and consequently became engrossed in this world like a fish takes to water at the first opportunity. Say, if this can happen to the Ishwar whose Maya did not think twice in casting its evil spell upon its own Lord, how can an ordinary creature can ever expect to be free from its tentacles!]

Therefore, the supreme Ishwar, now as a creature, began to treat himself as a doer of deeds and an enjoyer of or a sufferer from the consequences of those deeds because he became associated with the three types of bodies in the form of a worldly creature.

When he got associated with the body having three divisions (gross, subtle and causal), he naturally lived through all the states through which these bodies pass during their sojourn in this mortal world—such as the waking state, the dreaming state, the deep sleep state, and the Turiya state of existence. Further, since he had assumed all the characteristics of a creature’s body, he assumed that he would die like an ordinary creature. Thus, the immortal Lord became mortal! [In other words, once the Maya and Moha had their upper hands, the Lord of creation was misled to believe that he is an ordinary mortal being who has a mortal body, undergoes the three states of existence so characteristic of the body, and that he would die and enjoy or suffer the results of his deeds.]

As a result he went round and round like the bullock turning the water-wheel or the potter’s wheel which goes on endlessly turning; he got trapped in this wheel of a continuous cycle of birth and death (12).”

Refer also to the *Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 47-49, 52-54, 56-57 describe what Maya actually is, how it creates this world and hides the ‘truth’ known as ‘super Consciousness’, and goes on to describe the two important types of Shaktis or dynamic powers of Maya—one called the *Vikshep Shakti* and the other called the *Aavarana Shakti*. This Upanishad is quoted below in Chapter no. 5 under the sub-heading 5.2.

Goswami Tulsidas’ epic “Ram Charit Manas” is rich in wisdom, metaphysical principles and spiritual philosophy all of which have been explained in simple language. In one of its verses, Lord Ram, the incarnation of the Supreme Being, has succinctly briefed why the Atma, or the pure consciousness known as the ‘soul’, has got entangled in the web known as this mortal world of delusions. This is narrated by the Lord in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai (verse) nos. 4-5 that precede Doha (couplet) no. 44 as follows:—

ākara cāri laccha caurāsī. jōni bhramata yaha jiva abināsī. 4.

Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 44—The Jiva (the living being) is an imperishable entity (because this word refers to the Atma, the soul which is a

subtle, sublime and ethereal entity known as pure consciousness that never perishes, that is eternal and infinite).

This Jiva has roamed around in numerous births, and having done so for 84 lakh times he comes to assume the body of the human being. (4)

[Note—The obvious reason why the Jiva had to go on wandering from one birth to another is its ‘imperishability’. The ‘Jiva’, meaning ‘an entity that lives and has the vital spark of life in it’ does not mean the physical body of the entity known by this term—because this Jiva is imperishable while the physical body died at the end of each life. Then, what or who is the Jiva? The ‘Jiva’ is the subtle Atma or soul or Spirit that lives inside this gross physical body. This Atma is the true identity of the Jiva, the living being. When the body dies due to some cause, this Atma comes out of it, and then it re-enters another body depending upon a number of factors—such as the un-fulfilled desires that the Jiva had in its previous life, the chain of reactions for the deeds done by the Jiva during that life, and so on.

The basic concept is that *the creature attains that place which it desires for at the time of death*—refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 12 which is very explicit on this point. Further, it also depends upon the creature’s mental awareness and conception of the what constitutes the ‘Truth’—refer Brihad Aranyak Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse no. 1-6.

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 4/4/6 explicitly says that a creature goes to adopt that gross body upon which its subtle self is infatuated or attracted at the time of death or leaving the old body.

The Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 5, verse no. 23 clearly states that—“A person obtains a destiny, a destination and a new body according to what his thoughts were and what he had been wishing at the time of his death. This is not mere hearsay but affirmed and endorsed by the scriptures (23).”

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 3, section 2, verse no. 1 asserts that if a person worships the Supreme Being *selflessly*, i.e. with no rewards for such worship in mind, he is able to break free from the cycle of birth and death. Its Mundak 3, section 2, verse no. 2 say that a *man who has no desires* or wishes unfilled, i.e. a man who is fully contented, does not take a birth again, while a person who has unfulfilled desires would take a new birth according to the type of desires he has left at the time of death. Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 10 says that the destiny of a person depends upon two things—one, his unrequited desires, and two, the type of habitat or environment he wishes to live in.

The *destiny* of the person depends upon the *type of desires he has* while doing deeds in this world. This is stated in Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 33, Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 4-14.

What happens to *ignorant people* after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1.

Why does a creature take a new birth is explained in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 24; Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 9-10; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 4/4/6.

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 4/4/3 describes how the Atma leaves the old body at the time of death and enters a new body just like a caterpillar leaving an old leaf or twig and alighting on a new one. It reaches the end of the old leaf or twig, contracts its body, lifts its upper part, expands the body to get hold of the tip of the new leaf or twig, and then withdraws its body from the old habitat completely to make the new one its abode.

The question *who is a Jiva* has been explained in the following Upanishads—(i) Paingal Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2; (ii) The Atharva Veda’s Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12; (iii) The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 9, 11-12; (iv) Goswami Tulsidas’ epic narration of Lord Ram’s story popularly known as

the Ram Charit Manas (the ‘Ramayana’) describes who a Jiva is in its Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 117.

The Paingal Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2 is dedicated to describe *who a Jiva is*.

“That all-knowing and omniscient Ishwar (the supreme Lord of creation) invoked his own stupendous powers that created illusions and delusions in this creation, called his ‘Maya’, which allowed him to assume any form that he wished, and in conjunction with it (or joining hands with his own Maya, or allowing himself to become veiled in his own delusions) he entered the body of the individual creature. He was so enamoured with his own creation, and especially when he allowed his Maya to accompany him, that the same cosmic Lord who is beyond comprehension of even the wisest of men and the reach of the holy scriptures, such as the Vedas and the Purans, became engulfed or surrounded by ‘Moha’ (worldly attractions, infatuations, attachments, endearments, longings, love and affections). With this twin fault—viz. Maya and Moha—that supreme Lord who has no attributes and names became a ‘worldly creature’. [That is, when Maya found out that it’s Lord is getting interested in and developing affection for what he has created, it went ahead to fulfill the wishes of its Lord like a faithful and obedient servant would. Maya went literally overboard to please the Lord, and knowing that he might balk and suffer from indecision as to whether or not to allow himself to plunge in the formidable web of creation that he plans to unfold (because Brahm was an enlightened Being, and he would soon realise his failings), Maya showed its sly hand and made him get infatuated and enamoured with the creation to such an extent that the Lord lost awareness of who is was, and consequently became engrossed in this world like a fish takes to water at the first opportunity. Say, if this can happen to the Ishwar whose Maya did not think twice in casting its evil spell upon its own Lord, how can an ordinary creature can ever expect to be free from its tentacles!]”

Therefore, the supreme Ishwar, now manifested as a creature, the Jiva, began to treat himself as a doer of deeds and an enjoyer of or a sufferer from the consequences of those deeds because he became associated with the three types of bodies that he had assumed in his form of a worldly creature.

When he got associated with the body having three divisions (gross, subtle and causal), he naturally lived through all the states through which these bodies pass during their sojourn in this mortal world—such as the waking state, the dreaming state, the deep sleep state, and the Turiya state of existence. Further, since he had assumed all the characteristics of a creature’s body, he assumed that he would die like an ordinary creature. Thus, the immortal Lord became mortal! In other words, once Maya and Moha had their upper hands, the Lord of creation was misled to believe that he is an ordinary mortal being who has a mortal body, undergoes the three states of existence so characteristic of the body, that he would die, and that he would enjoy or suffer the results of his deeds.

As a result he went round and round like the bullock turning the water-wheel or the potter’s wheel which goes on endlessly turning; he got trapped in this wheel of a continuous cycle of birth and death (12).

Why is a Jiva trapped in the endless cycle of birth and death in this world has been answered in the Atharva Veda’s Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 13, and Canto 5, paragraph nos. 3-8. This is in addition to the explanation given by Lord Ram below in Chaupai line no. 5.]

phirata sadā māyā kara prērā. kāla karma subhāva guna ghērā. 5.

Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 44—“The Jiva falls in the trap laid out by Maya (the delusion creating powers of the Supreme Creator) which casts its magical veil of delusions around him that makes the creature continue to roam indefinitely in different births driven by his destiny and circumstances, his deeds and actions, his habits, temperaments and natural inclinations, and the various Gunas

(qualities that govern his character, thought processes, emotions, behaviour, reactions to situations, mentality and attitude etc.). (5)

[Note—It is very easy to visualize how this happens by way of an example. Suppose we cover a man with a thick blanket or blind-fold him. Then he is left to go wherever he wants in an open field without any support or guidance. One can well imagine what will happen. The case with the Jiva is identical. He is covered by the thick veil of Maya, and so he is unable to see his spiritual destination. He goes round and round like a bullock yoked to the water-wheel that pulls out water from the well to irrigate the farm. The bullock thinks that it has not reached its destination as it sees the same scene after each turn, so it continues to go round and round in its attempt to move ahead.

The veil of Maya traps the Jiva in the countless deeds he does, actions he takes, circumstances he has to face and overcome, the bad and good times that buffet him like the waves of the ocean tossing around the ship, and the numerous character traits that he carries along as his unique identification. All these things are controlled by Maya which uses the three classical Guna, known as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna.

The Jiva forgets in this tumult his original nature and identity as being the Atma that is not the gross physical body but the pure Consciousness. He forgets in the mellee of life that everything that has upset him and robbed him of his peace are related to the gross body, and not to the subtle Atma. The very thought that he has roamed in so many births, that he will die one day and will take a new birth, either as a member of the upper rung of the evolutionary ladder or demoted to a lower rung, proves that Maya has made the Jiva forget who he actually is. Remember: the Jiva is not the gross physical body that takes any birth, grows old and dies; the Jiva is the pure conscious Atma that is eternal, imperishable and constant. A Jiva becomes liberated when he realises this basic fact of existence; this realisation is his enlightenment; it is his deliverance from Maya.

Thus liberated and unbound, he is deemed to be free or ‘Mukta’.]

Another instance in Ram Charit Manas where it is explicitly said that the world has been created by the Lord’s Maya—known as the ‘Adi-Shakti’ because this is the primary form of the Lord’s dynamic powers that he had employed to create the world, and which was also the source of all delusions created in this world—is in Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 152 where Lord Vishnu has told Manu and Satrupa this fact. Now let us read this verse:—

ādisakti jēhim jaga upajāyā. sō'u avatarahi mōri yaha māyā. 4.

Baal Kand, Chuapai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 152—“The Adi-Shakti that had created this world, it is the same (Adi-Shakti) that has also given rise to Maya in this world.”

[Note—The word Adi-Shakti refers to the primary form of the Lord’s dynamic powers that he had employed to create the world. Further, it is the same primary force of Nature that is also the source of all delusions created in this world.]

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“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

(As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’)

Chapter 5

The Relationship of Maya with other Entities of Creation

In this Chapter we shall read how Maya is related to other entities of creation as has been narrated in the Upanishads.

5.1 Relationship between Maya, Prakriti and Gunas:--

The *Shwetashwatar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 10 describes the relationship between Prakriti, Maya and Gunas in a very succinct manner as follows—“Prakriti (primary Nature) should be treated as the Maya, and the supreme Lord called Maheshwar (one who is ‘Maha’—great, and ‘Ishwar’—Lord, of everything) as the maverick Lord who inspires and enables the Maya to not only create this world but also imprint it with its own characteristic qualities (much like the offspring bearing the characters and features, or genes, of the parent).

Thus, the entire creation bears the characteristic qualities and virtues so typical of and unique to Maya; these qualities and virtues form an integral character and nature of this creation as a whole as well as of all its individual units. [They are called the various Gunas.] (10).”

5.2 Relationship between Maya, Jiva, Brahm, Prakriti and World—

The concept and inter-relationship between Maya, Jiva (the living being), Ishwar (the Lord, or Brahm), Prakriti (nature) and Jagat (world) has been beautifully described in the *Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 47-49, 52-54, 56-57. It goes on to describe two important powers or Shaktis of Maya, called the ‘Vikshep Shakti’ and the other called the ‘Aavarana Shakti’. During its discourse we also learn what Maya actually is, and how it creates this world and hides the ‘truth’ known as ‘super Consciousness’. To quote—

“Verse no. 47 = The Prakriti (Nature) was created or produced by a combination of the three primary qualifications called Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas. [These are the basic qualities that determine the nature and temperament of all creatures. All living beings have them in varying proportions. The Sata is the best and most auspicious quality that makes a man spiritually inclined. The Raja makes him tend to veer towards the tendency to move towards the world with the intentions to expand and acquire fame and name. The Tama is the meanest of the three qualities which make a

man mean and of a low mentality. The personality and character of any man is decided by the ratio of these three basic qualities.]

Just like an image forming in a mirror appears to be very true, life-like and almost identical to the object of which it is a reflection (if one is unaware that what one sees in this mirror is merely an image and not the real thing), the reflection of the consciousness in the mirror of Nature appears to be identical to the original cosmic Consciousness. [The nature of a man is already said to be tainted by the three Gunas as stated above. When the consciousness is seen through this veil, it is obvious that these three Gunas would cast their affect on the real form and nature of the consciousness and it would be tainted by them. So though the primary consciousness is pristine pure, incorrupt and immaculate, its version as seen in living creatures appears to be tainted due to presence of the various Gunas that are invariably present in all living creatures as their inherent character and nature. See verse no. 48 below.] (47).

“Verse no. 48 = Since the Prakriti (Nature) consists of three Gunas, when the pure consciousness is reflected in it, the result is that the Prakriti appears to depict three versions of the same consciousness, or Prakriti begins to glow or shine with three different hues that correspond to the three basic Gunas (called Sata, Raja and Tama) that this Prakriti has as its integral part. [The Prakriti has no shine of its own but it is the consciousness that is present in a creature that makes it alive and showcase its characters much like the case of a lantern’s glass chimney of a particular colour which glows and shows its colour only when the wick of the lantern is lighted inside it. The light of the lantern here is the consciousness, the coloured chimney is the Prakriti of the creature, and the lantern is the creature himself.]

You, i.e. your pure quintessential ‘self’ as the pure consciousness, become a Jiva (a mortal living being having a gross body and depicting a set of characteristics or attributes) because of being separated or torn away from your quintessential true form known as the Consciousness (which is always immaculate, incorrupt and pure) due to this distorted view of your ‘self’ when the latter is seen through the prism of the tainted Prakriti. [The pure quintessential ‘self’ is consciousness personified. It is marked by being eternal, immaculate and taintless. On the other hand the Jiva is mortal, perishable and tainted with numerous shortcomings. This happens because the creature sees the consciousness through the looking glass of his inherent nature which is already tainted by the three Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama. These three Gunas do not allow anyone to see the consciousness in its true form. To do so, one would have to rise above the mundane and develop proper insight just like a microscope is needed to see things that are too small to be seen by the naked eye.] (48).

“Verse no. 49 = Prakriti (Nature) in which the dominant Guna or quality is pure Sata¹ is called the ‘Maya that is predominantly auspicious²’.

The pure consciousness that is reflected in this Maya (Prakriti or Nature) which is dominated by the Sata Guna is known as ‘Aja’ or the creator Brahma³. [And this is why Brahma is regarded as being predominantly wise, learned and enlightened about spiritual and metaphysical matters inspite of the fact that he is neck deep in the process of creation, and is enchanted so much by his own creation and its astounding beauty that he remains perpetually enthralled and so completely enamoured by it that he appears, for all practical purposes, to be deeply engrossed in this perishable and finite world inspite of being the creator of the Vedas and their Upanishads that are the epitome of knowledge and wisdom regarding spiritualism.] (49).

[Note—¹Sata is the first of the three quintessential natural qualities that determine the basis nature, temperament and personality of the creature as an individual as well as the entire creation as a resultant composite affect of the characteristics of all the individual units combined together to present a whole picture. Sata Guna is the quality which is regarded as the best quality present in a creature and it is marked by a predominance of auspiciousness, righteousness, virtuousness and noble qualities. It is marked by such high standards of ethical existence that have, as their characteristic features, such qualities as coolness of head, peace, contentedness, humility, devotion, wisdom, mercy, compassion, creativity, selflessness, service, righteousness, virtuousness, holiness and nobility of thought and action etc. As is evident, these qualities are the best qualities that one can have in him; they have a spiritual dimension to them; they are spiritually uplifting and give a divine halo to those who practice them. This quality creates an inherent affinity in a creature towards things in life which are of high moral value and uplifting for the soul rather than things which are demoting and denigrating for the spirit.

The Sata Guna or quality is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous such as righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, the positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc.

²Maya broadly means delusions creating powers of the Supreme Being. Maya is the indescribable and inconceivable cosmic dynamic power that the transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm employs to create delusions. The basic idea here is that Maya is like a transparent coloured sheet which covers the supreme ‘truth’ in the creation. Since it is transparent, it assumes the attributes of the ‘truth’ that it covers, because for all practical purposes an ordinary man is unable to see that veil because of its transparency. But at the same time, being tinged by different Gunas, the view of the ‘truth’ as seen through the veil of Maya gets tainted or distorted proportionately.

There is a simple way of understanding what is called ‘illusion and Maya vis-à-vis the Truth and Reality’. Let us take the instance of the lantern with the coloured glass chimney to visualise how this happens. The colour of the flame as well as the light that the lantern gives would obviously be affected by the colour of the glass chimney. At the same time, the chimney has no light of its own but when the wick is lighted the chimney begins to glow. This coloured chimney is like the veil of Maya surrounding the inner light of consciousness; it is the veil that hides the true colour of the consciousness and gives the latter its own hue. Maya has no effect upon the person who wishes to see the consciousness sans its interference just like the case when one can see the actual colour of the flame when he views it after removing the coloured glass chimney. Not only this, the colour of everything upon which this tainted light of the lantern falls would also be affected. In other words, the creature under the overriding influence of Maya begins to see the world with a tainted vision which is far removed from the truth.

Maya hides the truthfulness of the Truth, and instead lends its own attributes and characteristics to that Truth known as the ‘Nirgun Brahm’ by the Upanishads when the latter is observed through this veil, while at the same time the Maya assumes the glorious attributes of Brahm itself just like the case of the lantern with the coloured glass chimney cited here. So, ignorant fools think that the Maya is the real thing, whereas they are actually seeing the ‘veiled truth’ as observed through this covering of Maya, because the actual ‘truth’ is hidden from view by this transparent sheet which has lend it its own colour and hue. As a result, that Nirgun appears to have some attributes, and it thereby becomes ‘Sagun’, or the one with attributes and characteristics, by the interference of Maya.

As we have seen in verse no. 47-48 above, the three Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama are the colours present in the Prakriti that forms a veil that covers the ‘truth’, and that is why Maya prevents one to see and understand the ‘real’ nature and form of this ‘truth’ because of the intervention of these three tainting affects.

Brahma the creator of the visible world is also known as Hiranyagarbha, the cosmic subtle body of the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm. This Hiranyagarbha was the first step in the process of evolution of creation because it represented Brahm’s auspicious desire to create; it marked the dominance of Sata Guna because the very desire to create as opposed to destroy is a good quality. When the process moved ahead, elements of grossness silently and imperceptibly crept in gradually, and the Hiranyagarbha transformed into Brahma the creator of the visible world. So while Hiranyagarbha is the finer aspect of the subtle body of Brahm, Brahma is the grosser aspect of the same subtle body at the cosmic level of creation. According to another version, Hiranyagarbha metamorphosed into the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and it is from the latter that first Vishnu and then Brahma emerged. When Brahm woke up to the realities of life created by him, he was known as Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. Since Brahma, the creator of the visible world, is the first auspicious step that the Supreme Being (Brahm) took in this process, he is marked by the predominance of Sata Guna. That is also why the Vedas were pronounced by Brahma himself.]

“Verse no. 52 = In this way, the pure cosmic Consciousness possessing all the eclectic and divine virtues and supernatural powers, such as being Sarvagya (omniscient, all-knowing and all-wise) etc. is called ‘Ishwar¹’.

Maya has two Shaktis (dynamic powers or forces) that are employed by this Ishwar (pure consciousness) to implement its will. These are—(a) Vikshep Shakti meaning ‘deflection, dissipation, confusion, perplexity, obstruction, disturbance, scattering or tossing about in uncertainty and disarray, agitation of mind and spirit, fickleness, fragmentation, fission and disharmony etc.’, and (b) Aavaran Shakti meaning ‘to cover in a veil, to sheath, to envelop, to wrap in a sheet, distortions, pretension, deception, deceit and something that does not allow the original thing to be seen by covering it with a thin veil that distorts its originality; a veil of ignorance about one’s true nature, identity and essential form that cloaks the Atma/soul which is pure consciousness and the true self’ (52).

[Note—¹Ishwar is honoured by epithets which highlight some or the other of his majestic glories. Some of them, inter alia, are the following—Satya (truth), Shiva (auspicious), Sundar (beauty); Satt (eternal), Chitt (consciousness; knowledge), Anand (beatitude and felicity); Akchar (imperishable; the eternal ethereal word), Uttam (the best, the most exalted, the ultimate), Purush (the primary Male Spirit; the supreme Spirit), Parmatma (the supreme Soul of creation), Prakriti (primary Nature), Purshottam (the best Purush; the most exalted holy spirit), Pragya (knowledgeable, wise, skilled, enlightened and conscious) and Vibho (omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent).]

“Verse no. 53 = The first forceful power of Maya called Vikshep Shakti is responsible for creation of the entire world, right from the gross body of the individual creature at the micro level of creation to the vast universe at the macro level of creation.

The second forceful power of Maya called Aavaran Shakti is responsible creating a distinction between the ‘seer’ (i.e. the pure conscious ‘self’ or the Atma) and the ‘things or objects that are seen’ by this seer at the micro level of creation, and between ‘Brahm’ (the all-pervading seer or cosmic Consciousness) and ‘Srishti’ (the manifested creation springing forth from this Brahm and the latter’s visible

revelation) at the macro level of creation. This Aavarana Shakti covers the truthfulness of ‘consciousness’ and makes it tainted (53).

[Note—The delusions created by Maya casts a veil around the truth so much so that the Atma, the pure consciousness and the true identity of the creature, is unable to see the ‘absolute truth and reality’ behind what is seen externally in the physical world. It forgets in its ignorance created by this veil of Maya that actually the external world has derived the importance and worth because of the presence of conscious life in the form of Atma in it, and the exterior façade is merely a covering that sheaths this Atma. Shorn of the Atma, the world would be as good as a dead body—say, who would like to fall in love with a dead body? A living being is dear one moment till he is alive and useful, and as soon as he is dead, he becomes useless and is disposed of immediately at the other moment. The basic unit that lends life, substance and value to everything in existence is the quintessential factor of universal consciousness that is a non-dual entity. That is, the consciousness in the creature known as the ‘seer’ and the other creature who is ‘seen’ is the same. This is the climax of enlightenment, and the absence of it is due to the covering of Aavarana which eclipses or distorts this wisdom and enlightenment. The tainted Aavarana of Maya prevents one to come to know the truth and reality, and it is the cause of all delusions that create a sense of duality and separation between things that are inherently one, immutable and inseparable. This delusion creates an impression of one entity being the ‘self’ and the second entity being the ‘other person’. It is the cause of all strife, all bad blood, disharmony, animosity, jealousy, malice and hatred in this world; it is the prime cause of all dichotomy, confusions, perplexities and doubts.]

“Verse no. 54 = This (Maya) is the root cause of all worldly fetters that shackle a creature to this artificial material world of delusions. Under the influence of Maya, the Sakshi—the true ‘self’ of the creature, the pure conscious Atma that is supposed to remain a neutral witness to the happenings in the gross physical external world without actually getting involved in it—begins to see and recognise the external world that exists in the front of its eyes with its gross physical properties and outer characteristic features by employing the gross eyes of the body.

That is, the gross features of the external world are seen and believed to be the true and real form of the world under the deluding influence of Maya. In other words, the ‘Ling Deha’ (gross body) of the creation is perceived as the real world instead of the pure consciousness and the ‘truth’ that pervades through out in it in a most subtle and hidden form (54).

[Note—Since the world is beheld by the ‘self’ through the tainted veil of Maya which has already influenced the mind-intellect complex through which external inputs and information are received and interpreted, the creature (i.e. the Sakshi) sees only a distorted version of the world. That is, the creature is able to see only the external features of the gross world outside. This external façade is so life-like and magical that the creature believes it to be true and real. Maya prevents the ‘self’ from seeing the truth; Maya prevents the creature from realising the fact that this physical gross world is unreal and untruth and simply like a mirage of the desert—un-sustainable, transient, non-attainable, illusionary and deluding. The creature is not able to perceive the concealed ‘truth’ of life behind this façade, the ‘truth’ called the Atma or consciousness representing the cosmic Absolute without which this external gross body would be of no good. This is the magical theatrical performance of the maverick Maya that it produces a scenario that is so life-like and charming that a deluded creature who was supposed to remain a ‘Sakshi’ or a neutral witness to the external world is swept off his feet and gets neck-deeply involved in it.

Under the tainting influence of Maya, the creature is not able to see the hidden ‘real and absolute Truth’ and instead begins to believe in the ‘apparent truth’ which is more like the water of a mirage than the water of a river or lake.

In other words, the ‘Sakshi’, i.e. the true ‘self’ of the creature—who is supposed to be neutral and just mutely watch the magical creation of Maya unfold in the form of this physical world which is unreal, transient and perishable without actually getting involved in it (much like a spectator watching a magic show—forgets this basic principle and is so charmed by the scene watched that he gets swept off his feet and plunges head on into this world and its activities.

The net result of the influence of Maya is that the Sakshi gets neck-deep involved in something with which it should not have been involved at all—i.e. the ‘self’ of the creature should have remained neutral towards the material objects of the world and getting involved in them, should have seen the underlying ‘truth’ in the world and not be swept off by its external charms, but unfortunately this does not happen. Under the delusory effects of Maya, this Sakshi believes that what he sees in the outside world of sense objects is the truth and reality, and therefore it is worth pursuing and obtaining. The Sakshi allows himself to be voluntarily trapped like a bird willingly getting caught in a bird-catcher’s net.

The fact is that the world is artificial and an imaginary creation of the mind and its sub-conscious (refer Yogshika Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 6, verse nos. 58-61, 70), and the Atma—which is eternally wised and enlightened—is supposed to be aware of this fact and treat the artificial world as such. But unfortunately it doesn’t. This is because the Atma, which is supposed to be a mere ‘Sakshi’ (mute, dispassionate, neutral and non-involved witness) gets deluded or misled by the veil of ignorance cast around it by Maya. Treating itself as part of the world, the Sakshi gets involved in the activities of the world. Having exceeded its brief, the Sakshi is bound to suffer from its excesses and get tied in shackles represented by various misconceptions about the reality and truth. The Sakshi remains involved in doing deeds and hopes that he would get peace and comfort from this world. This world is like a whirlpool in an ocean, it sucks the Sakshi deeper in its vortex and it remains ever trapped in the cycle of birth and death, bobbing up and down in this vast endless ocean represented by this world. After a very long time and many births, the Sakshi realises its follies and decides that enough is enough; it now endeavours to find out a way that would finally ensure that liberation and deliverance is obtained by it at any cost, and that it would not do anything which would force it into being subjugated by Maya and recycled into the bin of birth and death once again. It then researches on the method to achieve this end, and studies the scriptures and consults wise men. It discovers that the basic cause of the entire edifice getting erected is Maya and its delusory effects. It also realises that the ‘self’ does nothing, and that everything is done by the ‘non-self’, i.e. the gross body. So, it abhors Maya and delusions created by it, deciding not to get involved in the world. Consequently, when the past baggage of deeds and their consequences are exhausted and newer ones do not accumulate, the Sakshi finally gets its treasured liberation and deliverance.]

“Verse no. 56-57 = When the covering veil of Maya is removed, the creature is clearly able to see the error and the difference between what is the ‘actual truth’ and the ‘apparent truth’. Then the consciousness stops to have any kind of attractions for the gross material world with which it was so enamoured till now. [In the instance of the lantern cited in note of verse no. 49 above, when the tinted glass of the chimney is removed and replaced with transparent colourless glass, one can see the real colour of the flame along with the true colour of the objects that are seen with its light.]

Hence, the notion of the existence of a ‘Jiva’ (living being) who is separate from the ‘true self’ or the ‘conscious Atma’ vanishes. In other words, he begins to see the same Brahm everywhere, both inside his own self as the conscious Atma at the

micro level of creation as well as the cosmic Consciousness that pervades everywhere in the external world at the macro level of creation. [That is, the enlightened creature henceforth begins to identify his ‘self’ with the sublime and subtle consciousness that is invisible, instead of with the gross body that is physically seen in this world. Similarly, he sees no difference between any two living beings because the same conscious Atma lives in both of them.]

He also realises the truth of the fact that the primarily immaculate and untainted divine entity known as Brahm had appeared to be dual in the form of the Supreme Being and the Jiva or the Supreme Being and the manifested world. When the veil of delusions and ignorance is removed, the dichotomy between Brahm and this world is eliminated, and uniformity and non-duality between Brahm and the rest of the creation becomes evident. [That is, he realises that the visible world is nothing but the same immutable, indivisible and non-dual Brahm revealed in these myriad and multifarious forms in which this vast and endless creation exists so much so that no two units in it are identical.] (56-57).”

5.3 Relationship between Maya and Brahm—

Sage Veda Vyas’ *Adhyatma Ramayan*, in its Lanka Kanda, canto 14, verse no.28-29 describes the relationship between Maya and Brahm, albeit in the context of Lord Ram. Let’s see what it has to say—

Verse no.28— “Oh Sri Ram! It is at your inspiration, using your stupendous Shakti (powers and potentials), at your behest, and as per your wish that Maya creates this whole world infused and injected with all its characteristic features, such as, inter-alia, the quality of having ‘Ahankar’ (arrogance, ego, pride, haughtiness, vanity, boastfulness etc.) This is why you are blamed (accused) for all this deluding creation¹ (28).

[Note—¹It is out of ignorance that one says that ‘you’, i.e. Lord Ram in his primary form as the supreme transcendental Brahm or Lord Vishnu, are the creator of this myriad world with all its faults and blemishes, evils and vices, entraptments and delusions, shortcomings and drawbacks, whereas in actual fact it is your Maya which has done it. Maya had simply employed your great powers to create, which you had delegated to her in order to enable it to carry out your general mandate to create, but once it got going, it lend its own flavor to it just like a master gives a brief to his servant or cook to prepare a meal and then the cook uses that excuse to create a wide variety of dishes the details of which had been decided by the cook himself and the master had no say in it, except the general instruction of cooking a meal. If suppose the cook has used a lot of spices and condiments, then one cannot accuse the master of spoiling the meal; it is the cook who is responsible for it. But once the meal is ready, there is nothing that can be done except to throw it away. In the larger picture of things, the Brahm had ordered the Maya, his maid, to prepare this painting known as the world, and then Maya used this sanction by the supreme Lord to do her own bit in order to please him and, in the process, outsmarted him by creating a creation that even Brahm was wonderstruck to behold. Since Maya had his express orders, Brahm could not even blame her for what she had done, because the details were left to her and she did what she was good at.

Again, even as each original thing has an indelible mark, a special quality that reflects the character and skills of the creator, the world created by Maya also had its share of characters and qualities that are reflective of the hand that created it—and that hand was that of the Lord’s maid called Maya. So logically therefore, the Lord cannot be accused of so many faults that are associated with the world that Maya created. In fact, the word ‘Maya’ itself means something that is illusive, deceptive and false.

It is like a world of magic created by the magician, and if one, out of one's ignorance and foolishness thinks that this world is real and allows himself to be deluded by its charms, then the magician cannot be blamed because, to begin with, one is already aware that what he sees is a magical show, and even if he is unaware of it, there are other wise ones who tell him that it is so. If one still falls into the trap, then say how the magician can be blamed for the consequences of such ignorance and foolishness? In our example, Brahm is the magician, and the illusionary world is the magical powers that he possesses which are on display. The wise ones are the sages and seers who elucidate upon the scriptures and tell the creature to be wary, but if the creature does not pay heed, say what has the magician and the sage can do about is, except to wind up the game. This is exactly what Brahm does at the end of one cycle of creation when the fairies springing out of the Pandora's Box just go out of hand to create the Frankenstein Monster.]

Verse no.29—Even as inanimate things like iron become mobile and active under the attractive or repulsive influences/forces of a live magnet, so do Maya creates this whole universe/creation when you glance at it, though it is inert in itself¹. The driving force here is the invisible power of the magnet which infuses the iron with the power to move. The force which activates the Maya is you and you alone (29).

[Note—¹Here, the Lord is likened to a magnet, and the Maya is likened to the magnetic force that makes the piece of lifeless iron, which stands for the gross and lifeless world, to move and show signs of life. Since Maya cannot be seen even as the magnetic forces of a magnet cannot be visibly seen or perceived except being understood by logic and knowledge of physics and magnetism, one accuses the Lord of creating this world with its myriad characteristics. Even as the iron piece would show signs of movement inspite of the magnet not desiring at all that it does so, the very proximity of the two automatically creates such a situation. Only wise ones realise that the iron is inane and it is the magnet that is responsible for its life, and whatever signs of life that the iron shows is illusive for as soon as the magnet is removed, the iron would not move inspite of it now wanting to do now.]

5.4 Triangular relationship between Brahm, Jiva (the creature) and Maya—

The 'Ram Yantra' described in Rampurva Tapiniyopanishad has an interesting verse which describes the position of Sri Ram (Brahm), Sita (Maya) and Laxman (creature or Jiva) in its Canto 4, verse 8-10.

To start with, there was the Brahm in the beginning. When he decided to create the cosmos, he first produced his Maya (represented by Sita). Laxman is representative of the Jiva (creature) which forms the 3rd entity. As described in these verses, the 3 form a triangle A B C. The apex A of the triangle is Brahm, B is Sita and C is Laxman. This triangle explains the whole gamut of the metaphysical relationship between the three. Let us examine it and explore it.

In the beginning was a 'dot' — with no attributes (the point A of the triangle; Brahm). Then it 'extended' itself by a line or tentacle or spider's thread to create the Maya (the point B of the triangle; Sita). Now a single line can be drawn to infinity, and when retracted, it falls back onto itself and withdraws into the original 'dot'. That explains why we define Maya as an extension of Brahm as well as being vast and infinite.

Now, when a Jiva (creature) is created, a triangle is formed (point C of the triangle; Laxman). A triangle is the simplest 'enclosure' bounded by lines representing the three bodies of the Atma that enclose it, viz.—the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body. The creature gets entrapped or encaged in it. He gets separated from Brahm by the line A C of the triangle. Besides this, a triangle has a definite boundary, it is demarcated on all the three sides; it is not infinite as a single

line is, even as the microcosmic world of the individual is not infinite as the macrocosmic Nature.

The creature (point C of the triangle) is linked both to the Brahm (A) by the line A C as well as to the Maya (B) by line B C. It is trapped in the triangle A B C. In order to reach Brahm, the following options are available to this creature—

(i) It has to break its link with Maya (line B C) by diligent and industrious efforts. If it succeeds in doing so, the triangle vanishes and the creature is said to be 'liberated' from its cage. It is now directly linked to Brahm by the line A C.

(ii) Brahm wishes to help the creature to overcome the influences of Maya. In this case, Maya is slowly retracted by Brahm so that eventually point B coalesces with point A and line A B vanishes. The creature is once again directly linked to Brahm by line A C (because line C B has merged with line C A). The triangular enclosure also vanishes, thereby setting the creature free.

But 'freedom' entails not necessarily being one with the Brahm because line A C still exists, though there is no tug and pull from Maya (point B) on the creature (point C) as it was earlier. There is no drag on it, there is no compulsion of having to have a triangular relationship which binds the creature to the worldly trap and prevent its merger with Brahm. Now, after freedom, true salvation comes when point A and C merged, not before that.

(iii) In situations where the creature finds it too difficult to cut off the link with Maya completely (i.e. to break the line B C), it can still achieve freedom by diligently progressing towards Brahm (point A) by shortening line A C by various means prescribed by sages and scriptures (i.e. meditation, contemplation, devotion, worship, recitation of the holy name, gaining knowledge or Gyan, pilgrimage, charity etc.) while still maintaining his relationship with the world of Maya (by line B C to point B). A stage will come when point C will gradually shorten the distance between it and point A while point B still exists. This situation is what the erudite 'Raj Rishis' (or sagacious, enlightened and wise sage-like kings) used to achieve while still carrying on their worldly duties— they had their kingly pomp and circumstance but were internally submerged in the thought of the Brahm. A shining example in Ramayan is king Janak, the father of Sita.

(iv) When Brahm is especially very gracious on his devotee and finds that the latter is sincerely interested in coming close to him but slips every time, than he himself initiated steps to— (a) pull the creature towards himself symbolised by shortening of line A C. (b) and pulling the Maya towards himself by shortening of line A B. In this case, the point A B and C all coalesce into a single dot— i.e. Brahm, Maya and creature become one entity. This is called 'Kaivalya-mukti'.

(v) The Kaivalya-mukti can also be obtained by the creature himself by his own efforts— it can shorten the distance between Maya (B) and Brahm (A) by the use of Gyan (knowledge of the fact that Maya is nothing else but an illusionary extension of the ultimate truth which is nothing else but Brahm) and, at the same time, reducing the length of line A C (between himself and Brahm) by contemplation and meditation. The result would be the same as in option (iv) — i.e. merger of points A, B and C.

The natural corollary to this 'triangular theory' is the 'quadrangle, hexagonal and circle' theory. The enclosure formed by the relationship between Brahm, Maya and Jiva can have any number of surfaces—4, 5, 6 etc. The shape will change but they will remain 'enclosures or cages' nevertheless trapping the creature. The only difference between a triangular and, say, hexagonal relationship is that the former is a simple relationship while the complexity increases with each interactive line or each interaction with the world. The circle, however, is more specific, forthwith and blunt

in its depiction of this ‘enclosure theory of the creature’— here, the centre of the circle is the Brahm while the circumference is the Maya. The creature is prevented by this Maya from having access to the Brahm. The creature goes round and round the Maya but never accesses the Brahm. The theory emphasizes the unequivocal necessity to break the circle of Maya in order to access the Brahm. Maya here stands for all the delusion and ignorance that separate the creature from Brahm.

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“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

(As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’)

Chapter 6

The Associates of Maya

What are those negative qualities that go hand-in-hand with delusions? In Ram Charit Manas, Maya has been personified as the head of a family of negative traits in a Jiva, the living being. These negative traits are like the family members of Maya. These so-called ‘family members of Maya’ always accompany it or follow it in its wake. Together they hold the living being in a firm vice-like grip.

‘Ram Charit Manas’ is a classic that narrates the eternal story of Lord Ram which is universally known by another name as the “Ramayana”.

Lord Ram was a human manifestation of the Supreme Being, and this particular book, Ram Charit Manas, is acclaimed as a masterpiece of devotional and spiritual literature ever written.

Now, let us examine ‘who or what’ these associates of Maya are.

This discourse is given by the saintly crow named Kaagbhusund to Garud, the legendary Eagle who is the mount of Lord Vishnu. It is incorporated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand (Canto) 7, from Chaupai (verse) no. 7 that precedes Doha (couplet) no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72.

Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand/Canto 6, Chaupai/verse line no. 1 that precedes Doha/couplet no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72:—

caupāī.

bōlē'u kākabhasuṇḍa bahōrī. nabhaga nātha para prīti na thōrī. 1.

Kaagbhusund, who had no small affection for the king of all the creatures who could fly in the sky (i.e. Garud, the Eagle), said one again—(1)

saba bidhi nātha pūjya tumha mērē. kṛpāpātra raghunāyaka kērē. 2.

“Oh Lord! You are honourable and praiseworthy for me by all counts. Indeed you are the blessed one with whom Lord Raghunaayak (Ram) is pleased; you are the blessed one to have won the grace of Lord Ram. (2)

tumhahi na sansaya mōha na māyā. mō para nātha kīnhi tumha dāyā. 3.
paṭha'i mōha misa khagapati tōhī. raghupati dīnhi baṛāī mōhī. 4.

You do not have any trace of ‘Sansaya’ (doubts and confusions that arise due to delusions and ignorance) or ‘Maya’ (delusions themselves that would lead to so many problems outlined in the following verses) in you. Oh Lord, you have been very gracious towards me¹. (3)

In fact, Lord Ram has given me great honour by sending you to me on the pretext or excuse that you have some kind of ‘Moha’ in you². (4)

[Note—¹You have taken the trouble to come to my humble place to give me honour. You have heard the story of Lord Ram from me, thereby implying that I am the greatest and the most competent narrator of this divine story of the Lord anywhere in the world. You are the king of birds, and this is a rare honour that the king himself visits the place of one of his subjects to praise him. For this kind and gracious act of yours, I am sincerely obliged and grateful to you.

²I know that you are above the influences of Moha—because you are so close to Lord Vishnu. Anyone who is so close to the Lord, anyone who is so lucky that Lord Vishnu decides to keep him as one of his close aides, just cannot be touched by the shadow of Maya or its accompanying Moha.

Even Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself, has asserted that if a living being has ‘Bhakti’, or devotion and submission for the Lord, in his heart, the corrupting negative influences of Maya do not affect him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 85 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-8.]

tumha nija mōha kahī khagasāīm. sō nahim kachu ācaraja gōsāīm. 5.

You (Garud) say that you were overcome by ‘Moha’, but oh Lord of the birds, there is no surprise in it. [Why? This question is answered in the following Chaupai line no. 6 and onwards.] (5)

nārada bhava birānī sanakādī. jē munināyaka ātamabādī. 6.
mōha na andha kīnha kēhi kēhī. kō jaga kāma nacāva na jēhī. 7.
tṛsnām̄ kēhi na kīnha baurāhā. kēhi kara hr̄daya krōdha nahim dāhā. 8.

[Now, from this Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70 right upto Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72, sage Kaagbhusund lists the ‘associates’ of Maya. He calls them Maya’s ‘family’—refer: Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71. The different entities listed in these verses are the negative traits present in a person that indicate that he is under the spell of Maya, that he is deluded and has thereby lost his peace and stability of mind. These negative traits are closely associated, closely linked with Maya, and they are visible indicators of the affect that Maya has on an individual.]

‘Amongst all the acclaimed sages as well as the great gods such as sage Narad, Bhava (Lord Shiva), Biranchi (Lord Brahma), sage Sankaadi etc, and all the other remaining exalted sages and seers who are wise, self-realised and enlightened ones---(6)

Say, who has not been blinded by ‘Moha[#]’ (worldly attachment, attraction, infatuation, longing) amongst them?

Similarly, who in this world has not danced to the tune of ‘Kaam[@]’ (passions, lust, yearning and desire for gratification)? (7)¹

Who has not been maddened by ‘Trishna^{\$}’ (excessive greed for enjoyment of the material things of the world that is never satisfied), and whose heart has not been scorched (tormented) by ‘Krodh^{*}’ (anger, wrathfulness, vengeance, indignation)². (8)

[Note—¹In other words, the power of Maya, the power of delusions is so strong and overriding that no one can stand its onslaught. No one, no matter how learned and wise he may be such as the acclaimed sages named here, i.e. Narad and Sankaadi, or how exalted and divine he may be as represented by the two gods cited here, i.e. Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma who are the 1st and the 3rd gods of the Trinity—no one is immune to the influence of Maya.

The main idea here is that Maya and its different components are very powerful negative forces of creation that rarely exempt anyone from their influence.

Does that mean that no one is free from the delusions created by ‘Maya’ and its representative known as ‘Moha’? Well, the answer is found at two places in the context of this conversation between sage Kaagbhusund and Garud.

The first is in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 47 where it is explicitly said that all vices such as ‘Lobha’ (greed), ‘Moha’ (infatuations), ‘Matsarya’ (envy and jealousy), ‘Mada’ (arrogance), ‘Mamta’ (affection and attachment), ‘Raag and Dwesh’ (attraction and hatred or repulsion)—all such negative traits live in the heart of an individual only as long as the sun of Lord Ram’s grace and devotion does not shine to illuminate the heart of a person and remove the darkness of ignorance from there.”

And the other is found in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 43 where sage Narad has conceded that ‘Maya’ took over his heart when Lord Ram motivated it to do so. In other words, Maya acts only when Lord Ram wants it to act; Maya is in control of the Lord and can’t act independently.

But there is one very important exemption here—and it is the ‘Viraat Purush’. He is no one else but a personified form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm in the Upanishads. His other name is Lord Vishnu who is the sustainer and protector of creation. He is the omnipresent, the omnipotent and the omniscient Lord of creation. It is he who had incarnated as Lord Ram in the present case. Whenever the creatures of this creation suffered, whenever the evil forces of creation became ascendant and began to crush the good and decimate noble values, the Supreme Lord of creation intervened and restored the balance.

To do this of course he has to employ various tricks in order to trap and defeat the negative forces because these forces do not obey any laws or conform to any standard patterns of behaviour. The disease has to be cured, and so the cosmic Doctor (Vishnu, the Supreme Lord) adapts himself according to the patient and his disease. But to the ordinary world it appears that often times even Vishnu becomes a victim of Maya, but as reasoned above, it is merely a ploy to trap the evil and demonic forces, something which cannot be done by taking the straight path.

Let us take an example from the story of Ramayan to understand this point. Lord Vishnu had incarnated in a human form as Lord Ram, the prince of Ayodhya. Vishnu had to take a human form to eliminate the cruel, blood-thirsty and ferocious demons led by their king Ravana. For this purpose Ram had to create a situation that would give him an excuse and a chance to go and kill these demons. He did not wish to trouble others, so decided that his wife Sita would have to suffer a bit so that the larger good of the world can be done. Therefore, things were so manipulated that Sita was kidnapped by Ravana. This obviously gave Lord Ram an excuse to wage a war to liberate her from her captors. Every chance was given to Ravana to free Sita, but once it was certain that he would not do so, a fierce battle followed, and cruel demons were eliminated one by one with the war to free Sita as being merely an excuse.

Now, we read in the story that when at the time Sita was abducted, Lord Ram wailed and grieved and lamented for his dear wife, and even contemplated dying like an ordinary heart-broken lover. It appeared from all his demeanours that he was a lustful man overcome with grief due to separation from his loving wife. But this was only to disguise the reality of his true identity as an incarnation of Vishnu—because if the demons got a hint that their death was at Ram's hands, they would have either returned Sita or would have scampared to hide somewhere. If that happened, the entire exercise would have failed.

So, whatever way Lord Ram behaved was just for show. Actually, 'Maya' had not affected him.

²Lord Ram has also listed these negative traits to sage Narad in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 43.

#Moha—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 47.

The word 'Moha' refers to the misconceived and ill-advised attachment and attraction that a creature develops for things in this world which are artificial and transient in nature because of the simple fact that this world itself is temporary and perishable.

Moha literally traps a person in ignorance-induced delusions leading to worldly attractions, infatuations, attachments and passions. This trap ensnares him in a tight web, and prevents his liberation and deliverance. This happens only till the time he is veiled by ignorance and in his stupidity thinks to be wise, and therefore never attempts to find out the truth; he remains contented being ignorant in his fallacious belief that ignorance is bliss! There is no bigger stupidity than this. So a wise person endeavours to understand the real and truthful nature of the world behind the façade which is nevertheless false and misleading. He realises and sees the supreme Brahm everywhere, in all the creatures. Consequentially, all become equal in his eyes. He becomes humble and pious; he loses his haughtiness and arrogance; he becomes merciful, gracious and kind towards all.

Secondly, a wise person realises the falsehood of this perishable world, the futility of pursuing it blindly. He understands that he is merely a player in the hands of the cosmic Lord. He should concentrate his energy of serving the Lord's creation selflessly without expecting any return. So, when there is no involvement in the world and the deeds are done without any hopes, all the reasons for agitations and frustrations vanish. There is no fear of failure and there is no competitor to beat. This allays all sorrows, sufferings, grief and miseries that continuously torment a creature who has not overcome Moha.

The concept of Moha has been explained in *Ishavasya Upahishad*, verse no. 7 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition in these words—"In that realised and erudite state of enlightenment, when an exalted person becomes acquainted with and convinced of the truth about that supreme, transcendental Lord (that he pervades the entire creation uniformly and universally), all the creatures then become an image of that Supreme Being for him. In that exalted and enlightened state of mind when that person witnesses the Lord everywhere in a non-dual form (i.e. when he sees no distinction between the supreme, almighty, macrocosmic Lord and the humble, meek and microcosmic individual because both are an image of one another), what delusions and doubts, what confusions and consternations remain for him? [That is, no attachments or infatuations would affect him, and therefore there will be no cause for sorrows, sufferings and grief on separation from his dear ones, or jealousy and hatred due to worldly mundane causes. He goes beyond such lowly, denigrating and pervert emotions. Consequentially, he attains beatitude and felicity; equanimity and magnanimity become his hallmark.]"

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 66 describes Moha as a 'Granthi' or hard nut to crack or a knot that is difficult to untie as follows—"The aspirant's next hurdle to be overcome in the spiritual path is 'Moha'

Granthi': the hard nut-like knot that represents numerous attachments to and infatuation with the sense objects of the material world, longing for them and having a strong desire to acquire them and enjoy them—which together act like formidable spiritual blocks or knots or hurdles that need be dismantled or overcome before a spiritual aspirant can actually claim true freedom from the fetters of this world.

This Moha Granthi is such a hard nut to crack that it is made possible to do so only by the good influences of auspicious deeds and thoughts brought forward from one's past, as well as by the grace of an enlightened Guru (moral preceptor, guide and teacher) (66)."

The negative virtues of having 'Moha' is usually applied in relation to the material sense objects of the world, but it also relates to one's attachment with the body, with other people around him, as well as to acquire name, fame and wealth. Moha also means delusions and it's attending horrible spiritual consequences. Moha acts like a veil that obscures the truth from being viewed by the man. It leads him to commit errors and sins inadvertently because he is not even aware that he is acting wrongly. His mind is biased, deluded and corrupted. Moha is therefore like a formidable Granthi or knot because it is hard to crack like a nut.

A similar idea is expressed in Tulsidas' wonderful Book of Prayers known as *Vinai Patrika*, in its verse no. 117, stanza no. 2, which says—"I know that it is futile to pursue the material objects of the world and to remain engrossed in gratifying the urges of the sense organs of the body. I know that this is like voluntarily falling in the dark pit of ignorance and delusions. But inspite of this awareness I keep on running behind the sense objects like a dog, a goat and a donkey."

A dog nibbles at a piece of dead bone and relishes the taste of blood that comes out of its own mouth by constant biting and tearing at the tissue of the bone, but it thinks in its ignorance that the blood is oozing from the bone itself and not from his own mouth.

Similarly, a goat who is about to be butchered goes on feeding and nibbling at leaves etc., unaware of the fact that it is about to be killed.

The donkey grazes constantly on green grass in a large meadow but still goes on getting thin because when it sees the large stretch of land full of green grass lying ahead it thinks that it has not eaten enough and its stomach is still empty. So inspite of over-feeding its self, the donkey remains hungry and famished.

^④Kaam—The word 'Kaam' means sensual attractions of worldly charms and the overwhelming urge for sense gratification, collectively called 'Kaam'. It literally refers to lust, yearnings, lasciviousness and passions; desire for sensual gratification and enjoyments of the material world and its juicy attractions.

It also refers to a creature's various aspirations and desires which are said to be of three principal types. These *three Kaams* are said to be three types of desires and aspirations that a creature has. These three Kaams relate to the fulfillment of spiritual desires, worldly desires for obtaining the numerous material objects that give pleasure and comfort, and the desire to gratification of the sense organs.

⁵Trishna—Refer also to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71 herein below.

The concept of 'Trishna' has been described in the Atharva Veda's *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 35, and in Canto 5, verse no. 14 as follows—

"Canto 1, verse no. 35 = A person who is peaceful, tranquil, serene and calm in his inner-self would treat the outside world in a similar manner.

[This is like looking at the world through a glass window. The sights seen would assume the colour of the glass. If the glass is red tinted for instance, the world outside would also be red-hued. This fact has been beautifully brought out in Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 93/1-93/15, and in Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 3.

Now therefore, if the inner-self is pure and untainted, if it is calm and peaceful, the Atma—which incidentally is the 'observer' living inside the dwelling known as

the body of the creature—would see or observe the outside world as being calm and peaceful. On the contrary, if the inner-self is restless and agitated, the outer world too appears to be restless and agitated in equal proportion for the creature. In other words, a man sees the world like he himself is. Hence the importance is on attaining inner peace and quietude instead of seeking it outside because the ‘outside’ is a world that is constantly on the boil and ever simmering like the surface of the hot sand in a desert when mirage makes its appearance.]

Similarly, a man whose inner-self is burning with ‘Trishna’ (greed, rapacity, yearnings and wants) would find the world too tormenting and agitating for his soul. He would find only miseries and sorrows in the world (because his greed and yearning never ends, the more he gets the more he wants, and like a man running behind the illusive water seen in a mirage in the hot desert such a man too does not find peace anywhere in the world, but is rather scorched by the various sorrows and miseries that accompany shortages, unfulfilled desires, lack of opportunities and so many other things or situations that lead to dismay and frustration that seem to engulf him from all sides, drowning him and suffocating him in their wake).

[An internally contented man would be happy with whatever he has in this world and would thank the Lord for it, and an internally unsatisfied man may become the Emperor of the whole earth but would still want more of it, and remain dissatisfied and greedy throughout his life. Internally he is being ‘burnt’ by numerous aspirations, yearnings, desires and wants, and externally this world ‘burns’ him in failed ambitions leading to a chain of frustrations, dismay, distrust, strife, jealousy, ill-will, enmity, animosity and their accompanying sorrows, miseries and pains.] (35).

“Canto 5, verse no. 14 = Oh Anagh (one who is sinless; here referring to Nidagh)! Become silent and composed. Abandon all mental and intellectual restlessness and perplexities.

Discard all inclinations to think of anything; be neutral and immune to all thoughts (because any kind of thought would entangle you in a web of doubts and confusions as there are numerous doctrines and many aspects of the same Truth which would create more confusions in your mind than removing them, and two, thoughts would keep you on your toes and would not allow you to rest even for a while).

Leave aside all the Vrittis (natural inclinations and temperaments) that are the integral part of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious). [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 42.]

Be of an exemplary calmness of mind and composed demeanours; cultivate a high degree of mental steadiness. This will pave the way for your Nirvana—or the final spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 86.] (114).”

*Krodh—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 277 where Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram, has told sage Parashuram, who was very angry at Lord Shiva’s bow being broken as a precondition of Sita’s marriage, that anger is at the root of all sorts of sins and wrong-doings that torment a man.]

dōhā.

gyānī tāpasa sūra kabi kōbida guna āgāra.
kēhi kai lōbha biḍambanā kīnhi na ēhim sansāra. 70 (a).

Whether a person is Gyani (an enlightened and wise person), a Taapas (an ascetic or hermit who does severe Tapa, or stern penances and observes strict vows), a Sura (a brave, courageous person who is of a resolute and steady mind), a Kabi (a learned

person; an expert in any field, especially that pertains to the letters or scriptures), a Kobid (a seer and expert), or someone who is deemed to be a treasury of all the good and auspicious virtues in this world—

—Say, who amongst them has been spared from the embarrassment and dilemma that ‘Lobha’ (greed, rapacity) creates in this world¹. [Doha no. 70 (a).]

[Note—Lobha: Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 47.

In Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 21 where Sugriv, the king of the monkey race, tells Lord Ram that if a person is not snared by Lobha, then surely he is like the Lord himself. In other words, only the very holy and pious souls escape the trap of Lobha.

‘Lobha’ is such a vice that draws in its tentacles even the wisest of men. They all fall prey to its temptations. Greed and rapacity creates such a situation for them they sooner or later they are all embarrassed, and subject to ridicule and infamy. But inspite of knowing this fact, they still yearn for this or that material thing of the world.

For instance, a monk has renounced the world and taken the vows of austerity. Then he falls prey to temptations and begins to collect things of comfort around him. He wears ochre clothes and turns the beads of the prayer rosary, but his mind is preoccupied by the things of the world. He has to build a monastery, or a temple or such like things. Then he worries about its upkeep and organisation. Then he wants a bank account and money to fill this account. He now needs attendants, office and other paraphernalia needed to run the affairs of the web he has himself created around him. The vicious cycle continues. His greed for more and still more never ends. He wants his organisation to expand, to go to foreign lands and establish branches there.

A hermit builds a hermitage, then he collects disciples, then he wants more of them, then he wants his name and fame to spread, and so on. The hermit and the monk fall in the trap of ‘Lobha’ as well as ‘Trishna’.

Remember: Lobha, Trishna, Krodh etc. go hand in hand. One leads to another. Some are synonymous with each other, some are closely interlinked, some pave the way for other vices. And the vicious cycle continues.]

śrī mada bakra na kīnha kēhi prabhutā badhira na kāhi.
mr̥galōcani kē naina sara kō asa lāga na jāhi. 70 (b).

Who has not become haughty, arrogant and pervert due to the (false) sense of pride of self, pride of self-importance and self-worth that comes with acquisition of ‘Sri’ (worldly material wealth and enhanced prosperity)?

Likewise, who has not been defeated by ‘Prabhuta’ or acquisition of power and authority¹?

Again, is there anyone who has not been smitten (hit and conquered) by the lustful glances that resemble sharp-edged shafts thrown at him by a lady with bewitching beauty with eyes like that of a fawn²? [Doha no. 70 (b).]

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 60 where the same idea is expressed in relation to Daksha Prajapati who had become very haughty and arrogant when the creator Brahma had appointed him the guardian of his creation. It is said in these two verses that there is no one who does not become haughty and arrogant upon being elevated to a high place or on acquisition of power, authority and honour.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 43 where Lord Ram tells sage Narad that a woman is a personified form of ‘Maya’—that is, just like it is difficult to resist the temptations created by Maya, the lust of passions created by a sensual woman is also too difficult to resist.]

caupāī.

guna krta san'yapāta nahim kēhī. kō'u na māna mada tajē'u nibēhī. 1.

Who is not thrown into a delirum by the combined effect of the three Gunas¹ upon his mind and behaviour just like a person suffering from high fever caused by disturbance of the equilibrium between three humours of the body²?

Who is not stung by the tormentors known as 'Maan' and 'Mada'³? [In other words, it is very difficult not to become proud, arrogant and haughty upon getting honour and fame, or on acquiring a high position in society and being praised for one's achievements and qualities.] (1)

[Note—¹The three Gunas referred here are the following—Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. The Sata Guna are auspicious qualities in a man; the Tama Guna are the worst and the most despicable qualities; and the Raja Gunas are qualities that fall somewhere in between.

According to the philosophy of the Upanishads, every living being has these three Gunas in varying proportions. They control and decide each living being's behaviour and thought processes that are driven by the combined effect of all these three Gunas working together. If the Sata Guna in a person is the dominant quality, his actions and thought processes would be noble and honourable in the same proportion as the intensity of this Guna in him, and will be opposite to that person in whom the Tama Guna is the dominant one.

²'Maan' means getting praise and honour, and 'Mada' means its accompanying pride, arrogance and haughtiness. In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precedes Doha no. 60 this principle has been affirmed with respect to Daksha Prajapati who had become very arrogant and haughty once he was elevated to the post of the guardian of the world by the creator Brahma.]

jōbana jvara kēhi nahim balakāvā. mamatā kēhi kara jasa na nasāvā. 2.

Who is not deluded and excited by fever symbolising 'Joban' (youth), and whose fame and good reputation is not marred by 'Mamta' (infatuation and worldly attachments)? (2)

[Note—Refer to Doha no. 70 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8 herein above.

In youth, a person becomes easily excited and is prone to being attracted to all the charms of the material world and the desires they generate in the mind. It is rare to find a youth who can control his natural urges and exercise self-control over his sense organs. It is rare for a youth to overcome all the negative qualities mentioned in these verses, be it anger, lust, passion, desire for gratification, attraction for the charms and material things of the world, desire for self, honour and fame, or getting sucked in the vortex of envy and jealousy.

Similar, the sense of attachment with the material world often leads to the downfall of great men who otherwise are held in high esteem by the world. They preach renunciation and about the falsehood of the world, but themselves are knee deep in possessiveness.]

macchara kāhi kalaṅka na lāvā. kāhi na sōka samīra dōlāvā. 3.

Who has not been shamed by ‘Matsarya’ (jealousy and envy)*, and who has not been swayed by the stormy wind of ‘Shoka’ (grief and its associated mental agony and emotional stress)? (3)

[Note--According to the *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 1 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, there are six enemies which are metaphors for the various faults that are associated with a creature. They are the following—Kaam (lust, passions, desires and yearnings), Krodh (anger, indignation, wrathfulness, ill-temper), Lobh (greed, rapacity), Moha (attraction, infatuations, attachments, delusions and ignorance), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, false pride, hypocrisy and ego) and *Matsarya (envy, jealousy, malice and ill-will)

When a man is under the influence of grief, his mind does not work properly and he becomes very susceptible to committing wrong. He would often do wrong things just in an attempt to overcome his grief without realising that such actions only aggravate his problems.]

cintā sāmṛpini kō nahim khāyā. kō jaga jāhi na byāpī māyā. 4.

‘Chintaa’ (worry) is like a serpent, and who is not bitten by it¹?

Say, who is that person in this world who is not affected by ‘Maya’ (delusions)? [That is, everyone is affected by Maya to small or great extent. No one is exempt from it.] (4)

[Note—¹The bite of a snake is fatal; it’s horrifying and tormenting. Rarely does a person escape death if bitten by a snake. This is used as a metaphor to emphasise the point that a person who harbours worries in his mind is virtually injected by a strong dose of poison that is bound to have a detrimental effect on his mind and health. His health decays and his mental abilities decline. In the long run his life is shortened and his productivity reduced. He becomes depressed, dejected and listless.

The debilitating effect of worries is also mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Kiskindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 12 that says that the worry of being killed by his inimical brother Baali had been tormenting Sugriv like a deadly festering wound in his heart.]

kīta manōratha dāru sarīrā. jēhi na lāga ghuna kō asa dhīrā. 5.

Is there anyone so resolute of mind that his body is not consumed by ‘Manorath’ (desire, wish, yearning; longing for something; determination to do or acquire anything; worldly aspirations) just like wood that is made hollow by an insect that eats into its substance or pith (such as the white ant)? (5)

[Note—The last word ‘Dhira’ (dhīrā) in this verse also means to be courageous and brave in the face of odds and adversity. This obviously refers to the state of a person’s mind and intellect. A person who does not allow his mind to become affected by adversities and misfortunes, whose mind is not agitated by even the greatest of provocations, whose intellect is strong enough to think coherently, wisely and analytically inspite of the all the uncertainties and turbulence surrounding him in this world—such a man is said to be a ‘Dhira’, a brave person who courageously faces adversities and misfortunes with fortitude, equanimity, calmness of mind and determination. He is ‘brave and courageous’ because he is able to maintain full control over his mind and responses of the body when faced with worries and failures to achieve desired results, when his aspirations are not fulfilled.

Desires and longings arise in the mind, and then the mind instructs the body to make efforts to fulfil them. The poor body has to obey the commands of the mind. If the mind is strong and understands what should be its priorities, then it would not push the body beyond its limits of endurance to go after things that are beyond its means. This helps both the mind and the body to have peace.

Realisable goals are okay, but again the wise man with a ‘resolute mind’ prepares himself for adverse results and does not worry unduly about them.

The word ‘consumed’ here implies that if a man is of a weak frame of mind, then his whole being, his entire life is spent in pursuing his desires and aspirations. He thinks of nothing else but ways and means to fulfil his wishes. If he is not able to fulfil them, his physical health suffers in the same way as when worry overtakes him.

Desires and worries go hand in hand. A man of a weak mind first harbours a desire, and since his mind is irresolute he does not know what to do or what course of action he must pursue so that his wishes are fulfilled. When given choice, he is uncertain which amongst them to select. And if his wishes are not fulfilled he starts blaming himself and all around him. His health is adversely affected; he would not eat and rest properly; his behaviour becomes restless and his faculties do not work in the same way as that of a man who is not too concerned about fulfilment of desires, and rather learns to take everything in his stride.

So we see that having ‘worries’ (verse no. 4) and having ‘desires’ (verse no. 5) are two factors that destroy a person’s peace of mind; they are virtually the two sides of the same coin. They together negatively affect a person’s overall health—both of his physical body as well as of his mind and intellect. He starts brooding and becomes forlorn, depressed, dejected and withdrawn.

But when would these two negative factors affect him? The answer is: When his mind is not strong and resolute enough to remain steady and overcome the numerous ups and downs of life by realising that everything can’t happen as one wishes, that there is no benefit in worrying or lamenting as they will only harm the person instead of doing him any good.

Similarly, being too obsessed with success makes a man depressed at the slightest hint of failure, and again this happens when his mind is weak and does not realise that everything can’t happen the way one wants them to happen.

The man who has a strong and steady mind would be able to deflect all sorts of emotional and sentimental storms that buffet him in the course of his life. He takes successes and failures in his stride. Instead of worrying about anything, he takes such steps that would help him to overcome the cause of the worry.

Likewise, if a man is contented with whatever he gets in life, believing in the Lord God and having trust in him that the Lord would take care of him and his necessities, when he believes that successes and failures are parts of the game known as ‘life’, then desires and hopes would not negatively affect him if they go unrequited.]

suta bita lōka īśanā tīnī. kēhi kai mati inha kr̄ta na malīnī. 6.

Whose mind and intellect are not overwhelmed and polluted by the threefold desires related to (i) a son (progeny), (ii) wealth and material prosperity, and (iii) worldly fame and name? [In other words, it is rare to find a single person whose mind is not obsessed by these three things—progeny, wealth and fame.] (6)

[Note—This verse is directly related to verse no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 70 which talks about ‘Trishna’. Here three types of desires are specifically mentioned—desires related to a son (such as the desire to see one’s son being successful in studies, business, professional life etc., or see him being praised by the world, or having a son

with an excellent personality, and so on), to wealth and material prosperity, and to acquisition of name and fame.

These three longings are overwhelming for a man. It is almost impossible to resist them. Naturally, any desire of any kind will surely rob a man of his peace of mind as has been stressed in all the forgoing verses.

The idea is that all these factors are different manifestations of 'Maya': all of them are 'family of Maya' and closely related to it. It is Maya—the 'whirlpool of delusions' pertaining to this gross material and perishable world—that is at the root of all these factors.

What is meant by this? Well, a wise and enlightened man realises that the true identity of a person is his 'Atma', his 'pure conscious soul that resides in the body', and that this soul is on its journey through the world because of certain circumstances or developments in the past when this Atma had allowed its self to be surrounded by certain veil of misfortunes that weighed down upon it heavily and forced it to assume the current body. Each single individual with whom he comes in contact in this world is similarly weighed down by his own set of circumstances of the past; each individual's Atma or his 'true self' is on his own independent journey. Their meeting and interaction is merely coincidental like countless passengers travelling to a same destination in a train. They forge friendship, share stories and food and addresses, and then forget everything once they reach their designated destinations.

A man with a steady and wise mind would therefore not be swayed by any kind of inputs from the world. He knows that his progeny is just another soul who is destined to have some sort of temporary contact with him, and that the son or the daughter has his or her own destiny and journey of life.

Similarly, a wise and erudite man realises that this material world and its sense objects are there only till that time his physical body lives in this world, and that one or the other day when his body ages and he dies everything would be left behind. So there is no use in crying over them unduly.

What is name and fame in a world that is driven by selfishness, and is of a short memory? People throng around those with whom they hope to satisfy some of their own interests, and no one would bother to pay a dime for an enlightened man who would try to wean them away from delusions and show them the correct path. People call such men as misleading the world.]

yaha saba māyā kara parivārā. prabala amiti kō baranai pārā. 7.

All the negative qualities mentioned herein above are deemed to be the 'Family of Maya'¹.

They are very powerful and strong; they form an extended family with countless members, each with its own polluting effects and corrupting abilities, and working together to serve their principal, the Maya².

It is not possible for anyone to count them or describe how they work in tandem to delude the creature. (7)

[Note—¹The entities that are different variations of Maya—i.e. factors that incite worldly delusions in a man—as named in these verses, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71, are the following:—

Moha (attachment, infatuation), Kaam (lust, passion), Trishna (desires, yearning), Krodh (anger), Lobha (greed), Sri Mada (pride of self; pride of honour and achievements, of worldly prosperity and wealth), Gunas (the three inherent qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas that every living being possesses, and which mould his character and personality), Maana Mada (arrogance and haughtiness that comes with

honour, success and respect), Joban Jwar (the recklessness and arrogance of youth), Mamta (affection and attachment to worldly things), Matsarya (envy, jealousy), Shoka (grief), Chinta (worry), Maya (delusions), Manorath (hopes, aspirations, vows, desires, determination to do this and achieve that), and the trio consisting of son/progeny-wealth/prosperity/fame/good name.

They are all close associates of Maya, their 'boss'. They foster Maya and work in tandem with it. They are like an extended family of Maya; they all help each other, and have the same gene in them—the characteristic quality of 'delusion' that is the common factor with all of them. All of them produce delusion of some kind, and all of them therefore rob the creature of his peace and happiness, as well as affect negatively the stability of mind and reasoning ability of the intellect.

²Besides the specific negative qualities named in the forgoing verses, there are many more others that are natural off-shoots of the primary ones just like a huge banyan tree having a main trunk—which here is the 'Maya', from which the main branches of the tree spread out in all the directions—which are represented by the negative qualities named in these verses, and then there are so many countless other smaller sub-branches and shoots that give the shape of a thick canopy around the tree, making it look huge and cover an extensive area around the main trunk. These countless smaller shoots and sub-branches of the main tree are like the many negative qualities that are subsidiaries or ancillaries of the main negative qualities mentioned in this discussion.]

siva caturānana jāhi ḥērāhīṁ. apara jīva kēhi lēkhē māhīṁ. 8.

When even the two powerful gods of the Trinity, i.e. Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma (who is also known as 'Chaturan' because he has four heads, enabling him to see in all the four directions of his creation simultaneously) are afraid of 'Maya' and its powerful negative influences¹, then say what do ordinary creatures of this world count? [That is, when Shiva and Brahma, who are two senior gods of this creation, fear to annoy Maya and are afraid that they would be affected by its negative and corrupting influences, then other creatures, including the other junior gods, have no chance of opposing the onslaught of Maya.]¹ (8)

[Note—¹Inspite of this fact that Maya is so powerful that it can instill fear in the mind of such powerful gods as Shiva and Brahma who themselves are wise and fully able to look after themselves, it (Maya) is like a timid maid in front of the Supreme Being represented by Lord Ram, who in turn is a human manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being known also as the Viraat Purush. Therefore, Maya cannot play tricks with its Lord, the Supreme Being. Rather, Maya has to dance to the tune set by Lord Ram. This is endorsed in Doha no. 71 (b) that follows below.

Further, 'Maya' (worldly delusions) is regarded as a dancer who is very cunning. She is herself afraid of 'Bhakti' (the auspicious virtue of devotion for Lord God) that is personified as another maid of the Lord, but his favourite. This being the case, the dancer maid (Maya) is afraid to offend the maid who is the Lord's favourite (i.e. Bhakti). This simply means that a person who has Bhakti in him is free from the negative affects of Maya. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116.

Later on in this story we read that sage Kaagbhusund has himself asserted that ever since Lord Ram had blessed him and accepted him as one of his devotees, Maya had stopped tormenting him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

dōhā.

byāpi rahē'u sansāra mahum̄ māyā kaṭaka pracanḍa.
sēnāpati kāmādi bhaṭa dambha kapaṭa pāṣanḍa. 71 (a).

[In this Doha, the symbolism of an army is used to emphasise how strong and powerful Maya is, and what are the different units of this symbolic army.]

The huge, invincible and fierce army of 'Maya' is spread all over the world (i.e. Maya is all-pervading and very powerful, conquering the entire world and marking its presence everywhere).

'Kaam' and others are the chief Generals of this army. [The other Generals of this symbolic army of Maya, besides Kaam, are—Krodha and Lobha.]

The warriors of this army are 'Dambha' (hypocrisy), 'Kapat' (deceit, conceit, fraud), and 'Pakhand' (pretence; falsehood)¹. [Doha no. 71 (a).]

[Note—¹In verse no. 7 that precedes this Doha we have read about the 'family' of Maya. Besides the entities listed in the forgoing verses, these three mentioned here are the other members of Maya's extended family.

Maya is like an emperor or king having a huge army consisting of all the negative and corrupting factors enumerated in these verses. Just like the army obeys the command of its emperor or king and serves the interest of its lord, the emperor or the king, all the entities mentioned in this discussion serve Maya and aid in its efforts to keep the world under its delusory spell.

Saying that Maya's army is present everywhere means that no one in this world is free from the domineering presence and fear of Maya.]

sō dāsī raghubīra kai samujhēṁ mithyā sōpi.
chūṭa na rāma kṛpā binu nātha kaha'um̄ pada rōpi. 71 (b).

But that Maya is nothing but a maid of Lord Raghubir (Ram, the brave prince of the Raghu dynasty)¹.

Though it seems to be far-fetched and false, but the truth of the matter is that the grip of Maya cannot be broken without the grace and mercy of Lord Ram. I (sage Kaagbhusund) can say this affirmatively and with utmost confidence². [Doha no. 71 (b)]

[Note—¹Lord Ram was an incarnation of the Supreme Being. Maya is likened to a maid of the Lord and a dancer. The other maid that serves the Lord is Bhakti (devotion). Lord Ram is favourable towards the maid known as Bhakti because of her good virtues and character as opposed to the other maid named Maya who is cunning and full of deceit and pretence. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116.

²Maya is afraid of no one else but the Lord. Anyone upon whom Lord Ram shows his grace is free from the corrupting influences of Maya. This is stressed by Kaagbhusund elsewhere also—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

caupāī.

jō māyā saba jagahi nacāvā. jāsu carita lakhi kāhum̄ na pāvā. 1.
sō'i prabhu bhrū bilāsa khagarājā. nāca naṭī iva sahita samājā. 2.

That maverick Maya that makes the whole world dance to its tunes, and is so mysterious that no one is able to know its true character and nature (and therefore, by extension, how it will influence the creature and what negative consequences would follow in its wake)---(1)

Oh king of birds (Garud), that same Maya dances like a puppet, along with her entire troupe of attendants, to the subtle signals given by the movement of Lord Ram's eyebrows. (2)

[Note—The same idea that Maya is like a dancer is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116. In this context it is also said here that Maya is afraid of Bhakti, another maid of Lord Ram, because the Lord is favourable to Bhakti.

Maya is so domineering in this creation that even Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma are afraid of its tricks (refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71 herein above). But Maya herself is afraid of Lord Ram because he is the Supreme Lord of creation.

'Dancing according to the signals given by the movement of Lord Ram's eyebrows' is a figure of speech meaning that Maya does the Lord's bidding, it completely obeys the Lord and never dares to play its dirty tricks upon the Lord just like a court dancer who never dares to play fools with the emperor or the king.

The court dancer is very alert and cautious to synchronise all her dance moves and gestures which are liked by the king. She is careful not to do or say anything that is not liked by her master and lord, the king; she is not concerned if the other courtiers are pleased with her or not as long as she manages to please the king. If any of her moves and songs are not liked by the king, he may not explicitly express his displeasure in an open court but hints to the courtesan with a movement of his eyebrows, such as raising them, or arching them and frowning at her. She immediately picks up the cue and changes her stance instantly.

Similarly, Maya keeps a close watch whether or not her actions and deeds are liked by Lord Ram. If she finds that she has annoyed the Lord by casting her evil spell on someone favoured by the Lord such as his devotee, and this has not been liked by the Lord when he indicates his disapproval by arching his eyebrows, Maya immediately stops her tricks and lets that person rest in peace.

It means that Maya is very obedient to Lord Ram, and therefore it does not touch the Lord's devotees. One such example is sage Kaagbhusund himself as he is not at all affected by the negative influences of Maya by the grace of Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 89.

Maya has no guts to oppose anyone upon whom Lord Ram is favourable. This is the central idea of this Doha.]

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“MAYA”

THE WHIRLPOOL OF DELUSIONS IN THIS CREATION

(As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’)

Chapter 7

How Maya can be Overcome

In this Chapter we shall look into the question as to how one can overcome Maya if it is so powerful, and why it is important to do so.

Section 7.1: The View of the Upanishad:--

How the conquering and subsequent elimination of Maya helps the creature to conquer and thereby eliminate the world and its delusions in a progressive manner has been described in *Mantriko-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 4-8. Let us see what these verses say on the subject—

“Verse no. 4 = Knowledge of the truth about Maya can be obtained by ‘Dhyan’ (i.e. by deep thought and concentration, by contemplation and meditation, by deep insight and pondering). Armed with that knowledge, the spiritual seeker is inspired to move ahead in the direction of overcoming the deluding and misleading effects of Maya that had been causing hindrances in his spiritual pursuit, and as he endeavours to learn more and more about the fundamental truth about Maya, he gradually cultivates abhorrence to and annoyance with it. This helps him to break his fetters of ignorance, thereby liberating him from its clutches and providing him with deliverance. In fact, the effort that a man makes himself is the reason behind the establishment of this world. In other words, the artificial and entrapping world of material comforts and charms exists because a man wants it that way. This is because Maya has had the better of him. Conversely, if the same man can vanquish Maya, he would triumph over delusions and ignorance, and consequentially over the world itself. Then the world won’t exist for him (4).

[Note--This world has not come into existence of its own. It is a result of a man’s conscious effort to imagine the existence of an entity called the world. It is there because he imagines it to be there, he wants it to be there; he has created it to enjoy it for himself, and he has created it mentally to suit his own comforts, desires and ambitions. Should he decide otherwise, should he realise that he has allowed himself to get trapped in a hallucinating mirage of day-dreaming which has no pith and substance in it, then the world, with all its charms and attractions, all its joys and pleasures as well as all its pains and agonies, would simply vanish. This is because the existence of the world has its origin in the mind which is under the influence of

Maya consisting of delusions, falsehoods and ignorance. This profound realisation is what is expected with acquisition of truthful knowledge and erudition; it is the culmination of wisdom and enlightenment; it is the realisation that this world, which is a visible manifestation of the stupendous and magnificent potentials of Maya, is indeed a magical play of the delusion creating powers of this Maya. Truthful knowledge would help the man to remove this dark cloud of ignorance that shrouds the mind and intellect, and instead illuminate the realm of the mind and intellect with the light of realisation about the actual truth of the falsehood of Maya-induced existence which is as illusionary and deceptive as a mirage in a desert.]

“Verse no. 5 = This Maya is like the mother-cow. She embodies in her self both the causes of birth as well as of death. [The entire creation is caused by the deluding effects of Maya in the first place. Then, it is because of this delusion that a creature thinks that it dies, because actually the Atma, which is the truthful identity of the creature, is eternal and imperishable; it never dies. That is why Maya is both the creator as well as the killer.] The entire creation is like her calf. She is the mother to the entire creation having given birth to it, and as a mother she nourishes and sustains it. [The entire creation, though false and deluding, is so overwhelming that it even misleads the wise ones; even they find it hard not to be enticed by its charms and remain immune from its deluding effects. It is fortunate that some of them do realise the artificiality of the entire set-up, and they are the ones who find liberation and deliverance from its fetters.] Her complexion has three shades or hues of colours—white (fair; grey; all the light shades), dark (brown, black, yellowish and all shades of colours that are not essentially white) and blood red (or copper colour)¹. She is the one who fulfills all the desires of her devotees. [Here the phrase ‘her devotees’ refers to those persons who have faith in the existence of the world and belief in the truthfulness of Maya. They are those persons who treat Maya as their real mother and guide, which is nevertheless an absolutely erroneous notion.] She is honoured by the title of ‘Vibho’, i.e. one who is omnipresent, all-pervading, almighty, majestic, and the Lord of all that falls within her realm. [Maya is like an empress; she rules over her roost like a queen. All those who are under her command and sway have to live according to her will. In other words, she completely overwhelms those creatures who show respect to Maya or pay the slightest of attention to it.] (5).

[Note--¹These *three colours* represent the three basic qualities, called Gunas, present in all the creatures. Even as an offspring gets the colour of the skin of the race to which it belongs, the inherent characters of all creatures are inherited from their mother, and this mother is Maya. The white colour stands for the best category of qualities called Sata Guna, the red colour stands for the second and medium quality called Raja, and the dark colour stands for the meanest quality called Tama. The word Tam itself means ‘dark’ and it stands for the worst type of qualities leading to sinful and pervert nature in a man which makes his life hellish; the word ‘red’ is a metaphor for anger, vehemence, vengeance, agitations, restlessness, short temper, strife, hatred, envy, jealousy and the other such negative worldly characteristics in a person; the colour ‘white’ stands for peace, tranquility, prosperity, happiness and wisdom, all of which are the characters of noble and gentlemanly persons. Refer also Shewata-shwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse 4-5, and Paingalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3 in this context.]

“Verse no. 6 = All creatures drink the milk of this cow representing Maya. They find nourishment in it; they are sustained by it; they develop on it. [In other words, even as the body and its general development reflect the type of nourishment that it gets, the nature and temperament of a creature reflect the qualities of its nourisher, the Maya,

from whom it has drawn its subtle virtues. The traits that are apparent in a creature are a reflection of its mentor, which is Maya in this case.]

But those who are wise and who have not drunk this milk provided by Maya are enlightened about the irrefutable truth pertaining to the supreme and transcendental Lord who is beyond the purview of Maya. That Lord is different from what Maya has taught her off springs to believe in. That Supreme Being remains aloof from all the illusionary notions and conceptions created by Maya. He nevertheless resides in the bosom of all creatures as their Atma, as their pure conscious soul. From there he enjoys this world created by Maya, but remains indifferent towards and detached from it all. Metaphorically, he drinks the milk given by Maya, but does not derive any nourishment from it; he does not benefit from that milk. In other words, the Atma seems to live and enjoy and participate in all the activities pertaining to this artificial world, but it remains aloof from them; it remains detached and indifferent from the delusions created by this world of artificiality; it has no emotional ties to the world created by Maya (6).

[Note—In short, this verse implies that though the Atma, which is pure consciousness and an image of Brahm, appears to be engulfed and overcome by Maya because the Atma is regarded as the truthful identity of a creature but unfortunately this creature is possessed by Maya. Actually, it is the body and the mind of the creature that are engrossed in this world, and not the enlightened Atma. When this conception is extended at the macrocosmic level, it implies that the supreme transcendental Brahm does not get involved in the artificial world created by his delusion creating powers known as Maya, though that Brahm pervades throughout this creation uniformly. Therefore, to say that Brahm, and by extension the Atma of the creature, is involved in Maya and its tricks which are denigrating for the creature and which cause hindrance in its liberation and deliverance is a wrong statement based on ignorance and misinterpretation of the factual position.]

“Verse no. 7 = The supreme transcendental Lord, who has manifested his stupendous and majestic powers and potentials in the form of Maya, is the one who is worshipped by the means of offering of oblations during fire sacrifices by wise and religious persons. It is he whose milk is actually being drunk by ordinary people when they appear to be drinking the milk of the cow representing Maya (as described earlier). [In other words, both the wise people who perform fire sacrifices for their spiritual welfare and the ordinary people who do it for material benefits derived from such religious activities are actually worshipping the same supreme Lord and enjoying his magnanimity and benevolence, though apparently in different ways. For example, the fire sacrifices are often done to fulfill worldly aspirations which are the result of illusions created by Maya—such as in the case of the Ashwamedh or horse sacrifice which was done by kings and emperors to establish their authority over their realms and extend it further, though in fact this world over which they wished to extend and establish their authority is in itself a mirage in the first place—they are not indulged into by the Atma which, as a representative of Brahm, remains a neutral observer to all the happenings around it. But since everything happens not without the wishes of the Supreme Being, it is deemed that he is involved in all the happenings. But the truth is that all this happens due to the independent actions of Maya which keeps the creature deluded and under its blinding spell.]

In fact, by these activities of Maya, the glory of the majestic and supreme authority of creation is enhanced and established further (7).

“Verse no. 8 = Great souls who are wise, erudite and enlightened treat this world of golden charms as the visible manifestation of the Supreme Being. They eat the sweet fruits of this great and huge Peepal tree (the Fig tree) representing this world but remain indifferent to it. [The sweet fruits are eaten by birds that are only concerned by eating it and are not bothered about the tree and its fruit once their appetite is satisfied. Likewise, the wise man should allow himself to be involved in this world only till the extent it is absolutely necessary and prudent to sustain the body and take care of its basic necessities. He must not get emotionally attached with it just like the bird cited here.]

They live like a Swan that drinks only the milk and discards water. In other words, a wise man should take the benefits offered by the world and discard the rest of its useless ingredients as worthless and disposable.

Since this world is a revelation of Maya, they see the Supreme Being in the Maya itself. In other words, they realise that though the world of charms and comforts which they perceive is false, but since it has been created by the supreme Lord using his Maya as a tool to do so and since the Lord pervades uniformly in it as its very life and soul, what they see or perceive as the world is indeed a visible manifestation of the Lord himself in all his stupendous glory and majesty. So they appear to enjoy this world by their deeds and thoughts. That is, they appear to live an ordinary life, enjoying the world and going about their activities normally, internally they realise that all this is illusionary and therefore remain indifferent and dispassionate towards the world and its delusions.

[In other words, they enjoy the world as a sporting activity of the supreme Brahm just like spectators watch a sports event. A truly wise man remains engrossed in the world, cheering it and enjoying its vivid display of charm and fascination, but this involvement is only superficial; it does not affect his inner-self the least just like the spectator who might cheer the team which he backs, but once he gets back home life is back to square one from where it had started. So a wise man understands that the fascination and charms of the world are transient and are meant as a temporary refreshment and a one time affair for the Atma/soul, but they should not, and do not, affect the Atma in the long run. Since the true self of a wise and realised man is his Atma, and not the body which actually enjoys the world, he remains internally serene and un-involved in this world. Just like the events of the sports field have no bearing on the routine daily life of the spectator, the playful activities of the Supreme Lord in the form of this world created by his Maya has no affect upon the Atma which just watches and enjoys and even appears to be involved in the ups and down of life, but internally it never loses its poise and composure, it never loses its bearing. The worldly activities do not affect a wise man in the least.]

All graduates in metaphysics and spiritualism (i.e. those who have a basic knowledge of what the scriptures say about Maya and Brahm) and those who aspire to rise above the mundane are steeped in this erudition and wisdom (8).”

The *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 49 answers the question ‘why it is important to overcome Maya’ in these words—“Only those persons who have cleansed their inner self of all taints and blackening soot created by Maya (representing all sorts of delusory and ignorance-based conceptions and misunderstandings pertaining to the actual reality and truth) are able to see the reflection or image of the Supreme Being in their inner self. This image is as glorious as its principle who has his own self-created body (i.e. who does not live in some other body like the creature’s Atma which lives in another gross body when it takes

birth in this world), is self-illuminated, and is the universal witness and observer of everything in this creation (which implies that he is present everywhere, inside and outside of everything, at the same time, and also in all phases of time such as the past, the present and the future).

Therefore it follows that those who are covered by the veil cast by Maya and tainted by its evil shadow of deceit and illusions can never hope to see this glorious Divinity shining in their inner self (49).

[Note—It is like the case of seeing the image of the sun or the moon in a mirror. If the mirror is clean, the image would be perfect, and the dirtier or the more tarnished the mirror is the more unclear and distorted would the image be.]”

Section 7.2 Ram Charit Manas:--

The remedy to the ill-effects of Maya is prescribed in Ram Charit Manas as having ‘Bhakti’ or devotion for the Lord God. The ill effects of Maya can be overcome in a practical and easy way by this method of Bhakti.

Since the holy Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is totally dedicated to Lord Ram, the human incarnation of the Supreme Being, whatever is written here is centered around this theme of Lord Ram. However, it should be noted clearly that anything written in any scripture is a universal Truth, and therefore it is applicable everywhere, to all circumstances, to all faiths and beliefs.

Therefore, what is said in these verses is a universal Truth, and the method to overcome the negative implications of Maya is applicable to all faiths and all forms in which a person worships the Supreme Lord. The underlying principle is that the auspicious virtue of ‘Bhakti’, or devotion for the Lord God and total submission to him, is the easiest and practical way to overcome Maya. Tulsidas says that this Bhakti should be for Lord Ram, but this virtue can be applied to all faiths and creeds to which a person owes his allegiance.

Maya is afraid of a person who has Bhakti (devotion, love, affection and surrender) for Lord Ram in his heart because the Lord is especially caring for such a person, and Maya is scared of the Lord because Maya itself is a humble maidservant of the Lord—refer Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 116.

(a) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-9 that precede Doha no. 116:-

caupāī.

ihām̄ na pacchapāta kachu rākha'um̄. bēda purāna santa mata bhāṣa'um̄. 1.
mōha na nāri nāri kēm̄ rūpā. pannagāri yaha rīti anūpā. 2.

[Sage Kaagbhusund says—] ‘I am not speaking in a partisan way, favouring anyone and taking sides between any one of the two entities, Bhakti and Maya. That is, what I am telling you not my personal view or preferences, but it is a well-considered view as established by the Vedas and the Purans (primary and ancient scriptures) as well as affirmed by the learned sages and seers. (1)

[And what is it?] Their opinion is that a female is not attracted to, enamoured or aroused by another female's beauty and charm. Oh the enemy of serpents (a reference to Garud who devours serpents, being an Eagle), this is a unique and strange (but well-established) phenomenon¹. (2)

[Note—¹This is a well-established phenomenon of Nature that opposites attract, and similars repel. This is seen even in inanimate things of the world—we see this in a magnet. Two opposite poles of a magnet, the north and the south poles, would attract each other, but similar poles repel. A male is attracted to a female and vice versa, but a female is rather jealous, envious of another female instead of being charmed by her.

This observation of Kaagbhusund builds the ground and paves the way for what he will now preach in the following verses.]

māyā bhagati sunahu tumha dō'ū. nāri barga jāna'i saba kō'ū. 3.
puni raghubīrahi bhagati pi'ārī. māyā khalu nartakī bicārī. 4.

'Maya' (worldly delusions) and 'Bhakti' (devotion for Lord God) are both of the feminine gender¹. Everyone (i.e. everywise man) is aware of it. (3)

But there is a difference between the two. While Bhakti is very dear to Lord Raghbir (Ram) and the Lord is favourably inclined towards it (because it has auspicious virtues and endeavours to bring the creature nearer to the Lord instead of pushing him away from the him as done by Maya), the poor Maya on the other hand is like a cunning dancer (a courtesan, for example).² (4)

[Note—¹In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 71 (b) it is asserted that Maya is like a 'maid' servant of Lord Raghbir (Ram). And in Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow this Doha it is asserted that Maya that is so powerful that it makes the whole world dance to its tune is scared of annoying the Lord so much that all its moves are in accordance with the signals given by the movement of Lord Ram's eyebrows. That is, Maya keeps alert and closely watches how Lord Ram reacts to her maverick tricks. If she gets even a slight hint that any of her moves are disliked by her Lord, she immediately mends her ways.

In the context of Bhakti it is clear that since Lord Ram prefers it over Maya, the latter dares not offend the former because that would indirectly offend her Lord, Sri Ram.

The net effect of this scenario is that if a person has the virtue of 'Bhakti' in him then he is assured of freedom from getting tormented by Maya and the rest of her associates which are listed below.

²While having the virtue of Bhakti enables a person to attain spiritual purity and bliss, Maya on the other hand engulfs him in a web of miseries and problems that are associated with this gross and perishable material world of sense objects. So therefore, Lord Ram prefers Bhakti as it helps its adherents to become pious and holy and acquire auspicious spiritual values. Maya pushes the creature into the vortex of worldly desires and injects in him many negative qualities. So Lord Ram dislikes it.

The negative qualities that are natural accompaniments of Maya have been listed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71. They are called the 'family members' of Maya because they all bear the characters of delusion and their resultant problems for the creature (refer: Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71).

These so-called associates or 'family members' of Maya are the following—Moha (attachment, infatuation), Kaam (lust, passion), Trishna (desires, yearning), Krodh (anger), Lobha (greed), Sri Mada (pride of self; pride of honour and achievements, of worldly prosperity and wealth), Gunas (the three inherent qualities

of Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas that every living being possesses, and which mould his character and personality), Maana Mada (arrogance and haughtiness that comes with honour, success and respect), Joban Jwar (the recklessness and arrogance of youth), Mamta (affection and attachment to worldly things), Matsarya (envy, jealousy), Shoka (grief), Chinta (worry), Maya (delusions), Manorath (hopes, aspirations, vows, desires, determination to do this and achieve that), and the trio consisting of son/progeny-wealth/prosperity-fame/good name.

The independent and combined affect of all these entities on the creature has been explained alongside each verse in the text.]

bhagatihi sānukūla raghurāyā. tātē tēhi ḍarapati ati māyā. 5.
rāma bhagati nirupama nirupādhī. basa'i jāsu ura sadā abādhī. 6.

Lord Ram is kind and favourably disposed towards ‘Bhakti’ (devotion). This is the reason why ‘Maya’ (delusion creating powers of the Lord) is scared of it (Bhakti)¹. [Here, Bhakti and Maya have been personified, and regarded as close associates of the Lord. ‘Bhakti’ is the favourite of Lord Ram, so the Lord’s maid known as ‘Maya’ is scared to offend the former. On the other hand, Maya does everything within its reach to please Bhakti in order to indirectly please her Lord, Sri Ram, and be in the Lord’s good books by being docile and obedient.] (5)

The spiritual virtue known as ‘Bhakti for Lord Ram’, or devotion for the Lord, is highly pure and immaculate; it is without any worldly taints or negativity; it is matchless in its purity and effectiveness. [Whereas, on the other hand, ‘Maya’ is a corrupt entity, and so it has no moral strength to face the pure entity known as ‘Bhakti’. While ‘Bhakti’ leads the creature towards the Lord, ‘Maya’ pulls him away from him. While ‘Bhakti’ helps the creature obtain liberation and deliverance as well as eternal peace and bliss, ‘Maya’ does the opposite: it forces the creature in the quicksand of worldly delusions and its attendant miseries and torments.]

So, ‘Maya’ is afraid to disturb anyone in whose heart the eclectic spiritual virtue of ‘Bhakti’ finds a permanent residence. Maya is hesitant to play its tricks upon a person in whose heart Bhakti resides. [Maya knows that if it plays smart with the Lord’s devotee who has Bhakti or devotion for Lord Ram in his heart, then it is sure to offend the Lord who shall punish her for her demeanours because, as has been said above, the Lord favours Bhakti for its immaculate and pious nature as well as its endeavour to provide spiritual peace and liberation to the soul of the living being—which Maya does not do.] (6)

[Note—It has been said in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 116 herein above that “Maya is like a dancer”. The dancer would adopt the posture that pleases her master, and would synchronise all her dance moves in accordance with the liking of the lord for whom she dances. So obviously, Maya would not invite the wrath of her Lord, Sri Ram, by offending the Lord’s favourite maid known as Bhakti.]

tēhi bilōki māyā sakucāī. kari na saka'i kachu nija prabhutāī. 7.
asa bicāri jē muni bigyānī. jācahirī bhagati sakala sukha khānī. 8.

Maya is hesitant and reluctant to offend Bhakti and those who have this virtue in themselves; it is unable to play its dirty tricks and impose its will on those persons who have Bhakti in their hearts. (7)

Taking this fact into consideration, wise sages who are learned and intelligent have deduced that ‘Bhakti’ is a mine of all happiness and peace. (8)

[Note—Kaagbhusund emphasises in this forgoing discourse that out of all the paths and ways that are open to a spiritual aspirant, the best and the easiest is that of ‘Bhakti’ or having devotion for Lord God and total submission to the Lord. This ensures that ‘Maya’ and its powerful companions (Moha, Kaam, Trishna, Krodh, Lobha, Mada, Maan, Mamta, Matsarya, Chinta, Shoka, Manorath etc. as listed in Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71) do not torment the aspirant.]

(b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 295:

The fact that if a person has firm faith and devotion for Lord God, he remains out of bounds for Maya has been affirmed in the context of Bharat when it is said that Lord Ram and Sita are enshrined in the heart of Bharat like a deity is enshrined in a temple, and wherever there is the sun there can be no trace of darkness.

This universal truth has been affirmed by no less an authority than goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of knowledge and wisdom. She told the gods about the importance of Bhakti when they had prayed to her so somehow persuade Bharat to change his mind and go back to Ayodhya instead of insisting on Lord Ram returning home as that would be detrimental to the job of eliminating the demons for which Lord Vishnu had come down to earth as Lord Ram.

The importance of Bhakti as a tool to overcome Maya is the focus of this advice. Refer Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 295. Now let us read these verses.

bidhi hari hara māyā baḍi bhārī. sō'u na bharata mati saka'i nihārī. 5
sō mati mōhi kahata karu bhōrī. candini kara ki caṇḍakara cōrī. 6.
bharata hr̥dayam̥ siya rāma nivāsū. taham̥ ki timira jaham̥ tarani prakāsū. 7

Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precedes Doha no. 295:—Goddess Saraswati strongly admonished the Gods, saying, ‘Listen oh Gods! The Maya (delusion creating powers) of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer and protector of creation) and Shiva (the concluder of creation) is very powerful. But even these individual forms of Maya are not able to even glance at Bharat with ill-intentions.

[That is, since Bharat, the younger brother of Lord Ram, has the grand and powerful virtue of Bhakti in his heart, the Maya is afraid to annoy him so much so that it dares not look at Bharat with an evil eye. Maya knows that the Lord God, i.e. Lord Ram, will forgive her for all her mischief, but not for playing tricks with his devotee which Bharat was.] (5)

And you (the Gods) want me to delude the mind of Bharat! It’s a pity that you can’t see Mount Meru (the mythological mountain where the gods live) even though you have thousands of eyes. Say, can the moonlight ever dull the blazing light of the splendorous sun?

[That is, you have been blinded by selfishness so much that you don’t realise what you are saying. Just as it is impossible for the moon’s light to outshine the light of the radinat sun, it is impossible ever for anyone to delude the mind of someone

who has devotion for Lord God in his heart. So, don't ever think that I will be foolish enough to attempt to mislead Bharat.] (6)

Lord Ram (the incarnate Supreme Being) and Sita (the incarnate Shakti of the Lord) are reverentially enshrined in the heart of Bharat. Say, can there ever be darkness where there is sunlight?

[Having the Lord enshrined in one's heart is a metaphoric way of saying that one has intense and the highest degree of the eclectic virtue of 'Bhakti' in him. Here, Bhakti has been compared to 'sun light', and delusions to 'darkness'. The two can obviously never co-exist.] (7)"

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About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) www.amazon.com (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
- (b) www.pothi.com (in 'paper-back book' + 'e-book' versions),
- (c) www.draft2digital.com (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) 24 Symbols, (iv) Kobo, (v) Page Foundry, (vi) Scribd, (vii) Tolino etc.:--
- (d) <https://archive.org> at the following URL:
https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia

(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

- (A-1) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"); (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi Ramayan" based on Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of

Hanuman; (19) “Narad Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) “Shandilya Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitawali Ramayan).

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(B) The following Books have been published in ‘Printed-Book Deluxe Editions’ by a reputed Indian Publisher (details given below) :

1. Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition = 6 volumes; 18 parts. [Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads; Vol. 6= Vedanta Concepts explained with specific references to the relevant Upanishads.]
2. English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
4. English rendering of Devi Puran’s Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
5. A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Name and contact of Publisher of above Printed Books listed under (C):

Chaukhamba Publishing House, Delhi. [Sri Neeraj Gupta.]

Email <chaukhampublishinghouse@gmail.com>

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Ansari Road, Darayaganj, Delhi—110002.

Phone: Mobile (Neeraj Gupta)—+919811133683

Office: 011-23286537; 011-32996391

(C) Book under preparation:

A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

Contact details of Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia—

Postal address:-36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg, P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123, Distt. Ayodhya (Faizabad), U.P. India.
Phone:—(India) +919451290400; +919935613060.

Email of Author: (1) ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com
(2) ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com

Facebook ID: www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/in/AjaKumarChhawchharia

Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia